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LIFE AFTER LIFE:

An Anthropo-philosophical Approach In Marcelian Philosophy

An essay writing ending Philosophical studies accomplished at ***SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS MAJOR SEMINARY PHILOSOPHICUM OF KABGAYI.***

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AN ESSAY WRITING ENDING PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES

LIFE AFTER LIFE

An Anthropo-philosophical Approach in Marcelian Philosophy

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Kabgayi, 2016

DECLARATION

The undersigned, declare that this essay writing is my original work, and that it has never been presented to other colleges or Universities for academic credit. All sources providing information used in this essay writing have been duly acknowledged.

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Jean de Dieu TWAGIRIMANA Date 26/5/2016

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The Academic Master

DEDICATION

To God;

To the lover of wisdom;

To Paul SENTASHYA, my uncle and family;

To Vincent MUTURAGE, my uncle and family;

To Mgr. J.M.V NSENGUMUREMYI, my first spiritual father;

To Richard NANDI; my brother with whom I made my first steps

To Matthew NDIKUBWIMANA, my uncle and family;

To Martha AHIMANA, my sister;

I dedicate this work.

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« Je regarde vers l'avenir car c'est là que je passerai le reste de ma vie ».

Peter Schinzel

ACCRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

Ed.: Edition
i.e.: It means…, that is to mean…
Trans./ Trad.: Translated by…, a translation of…/Traduction de…
Cfr.: confer to…
Etc.: And so on, and many others.
***Op.cit* (opus citatum)** : in the already mentioned book

PUF. : Presses universitaires de France

Ibid. (Ibidem) : the same book

Id. (Idem) : The same author etc.

Ivi. : The same author, book and page

a.c.n (BC) : ante christus natum (Before the birth of Christ)
p.c.n: post christus natum (After the birth of Christ)

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0. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

0.1. INTRODUCTION

GABRIEL Marcel, as many other philosophers of existence, his philosophy concerns deeply life as it affects, willingly or not, each and every human being in his situation in the world. A well conducted research shows that Marcel's uniqueness stems from his attitude to the meaning of life. One can sum up his whole philosophy in a simple expression or option that: life can have a positive meaning. In this short essay, written as it is by a human being, we will try to be as objective and straightforward as we can, being truthful to the thought of the author, that is to mean Marcelian thought in the life domain, more precisely Human life.

Life after life is a domain that is not easy to talk about, the reason why our intention now is to look more closely at some of GABRIEL Marcel writings in order to see to what extent the investigations of others are borne out by his thought. I am not giving a firsthand account of experiences which I have had myself since: I have never been close to death myself so that I can claim a total objectivity on that basis, unless an analysis of GABRIEL Marcel and some other thinkers who tried to have a speech on that domain. This essay is and must be of an anthropo-philosophical reflection because life after this life remains a mystery, none rose from the dead to tell us what is going on there.

My hope for this essay is not far from the feelings of Dr. RAYMOND A. Moody, Jr.[1]. I wish it can draw attention to a phenomenon which is at once very widespread and very well-hidden, and, at the same time, help to create a more receptive public attitude toward the phenomenon of life and that of death since life and death are closely related phenomena. I am firmly convinced that these phenomena have great significance, not only for many academic and practical fields such as philosophy, psychology, psychiatry, medicine, theology, etc. but also for the way in which every person leads his daily life. In this introductory part, we are going to have a brief view on the statement of the problem of life in front of reason and the justification of the study, the research methodology, and the synopsis of the work.

0.2. A BRIEF VIEW ON THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM OF LIFE IN FRONT OF REASON AND THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Nowadays, the days during which our world is getting more and more a materialistic character, a great number of persons, on one side do not question themselves about life, but on the other side, a number of persons, who, in a manner or another, are aware of the meaning of life, do not cease to show their agitation about the end of this life. The techno-science is day after day becoming a major preoccupation for today's human beings in a manner that many are no longer afraid of putting their hand on the fact that due to science's discoveries in general, especially the organic chemistry, man will be able to manufacture life artificially! Which kind of life?

[1] A. RAYMOND MOODY, *Life after life*, Mockingbird Books, Georgia1975, 9

In fact, many persons, during these days that are ours, are losing their attention toward life, its origin, its meaning, its ultimate goal etc. This causes to treatise life (human life) as a simple and less meaningful phenomenon, or a little and simple necessity. However, human, in his nature is a living being and he/she is endowed of this title as long as he/she bears life in him/herself. Life bears a paramount and fundamental character, compared with other human activities and I cannot be afraid to say that even the image of the world depends on the result of human life, since all human activities

[1], and all man's activities[2] are results of the fact that man lives: "agere sequitur esse (the act follows the being)", and "All that can be said is that everything in our life happens as though we entered upon it with a load of obligations contracted in a previous existence."[3]

Inquisitively, despite its fundamental and paramount aspect, life is being regarded differently from her true essence[4]. Even though the vitalism[5] had been a general trend for scientists and some philosopher from the antiquity, during the medieval period and a great part of the modern period, since the 17th century, the rise and triumph of mathematics and physics induced philosophers such as R. DESCARTES, AND GASSENDI as well as many scientists to abandon vitalism and replace it with a mechanicist[6] interpretation of life. This conception resulted in denying the specific difference between living beings and non-living ones, asserting that there is neither essential nor qualitative difference between the two, but only accidental or quantitative difference. It is in a such way that Alfonso BORELLI dared to say that animal body is a well-structured machine with bones as its levers, the heart as its pump, and lungs as its hoovers. This conception is mainly viewed as the mother or origin of many practices that nowadays are mistreating life: Euthanasia[7], Abortion[8], suicide[9] etc.

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[1] **Human activities**: the action held and produced by human being in his whole essence, that is to mean, both body and spirit involved, in possession of all potential and movement organs as his nature deserves. The lack of one of these characteristics may cause deficiency in the action. (Cfr., THOMAS D'AQUIN, *Somme Théologique*, tome 2, Iª IIae, q. 18, a. 1, ad.3).

[2] **Man's activities**: Every action accomplished by man whereas one or many of his/her part(s) defect(s). This is the case of a mad person's action due to a deficiency or bad function in his/her intellect.

[3] M. GABRIEL, *Homo viator*, Henry Regnery Company, Chicago1951, 8

[4] **Essence**: this is to mean the whatness of a thing. What it was for a thing to be. (Cfr. B. NICHOLAS AND Y.JIYUAN, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, Blackwell publishing, Victoria 2004, 222)

[5] **Vitalism**: The doctrine that holds that living organisms owe their characteristics to some special vital principle, which is subject to different laws from those governing physical matter, so the behavior of living things cannot be sufficiently explained in mechanistic or materialistic terms. This doctrine, in opposition to mechanistic explanations of life, insists on a fundamental distinction between organic and inorganic phenomena. (Cfr. Idem, 728)

[6] **Mechanism**: A paradigm of explanation modeled on mechanics and holding that everything can be explained by the mechanistic principle, that is, by the interaction and combination of material particles. On this view, both animals and human beings are machines, and mental phenomena are nothing more than the sophisticated arrangement of different minute parts. In general, mechanism reduces all differences of quality into the differences of quantity. (Cfr. Idem, 418.)

[7] **Euthanasia**: The death of B brought about by A for B's sake, typically to terminate B's unbearable suffering caused by an incurable and terminal disease, B's serious paralysis, B's grotesque disfigurement, B's irreversible comatose state, and so on. It is also called mercy killing. (Cfr Idem, 232.)

[8] **Abortion**: The intentional killing of a fetus or fertilized human egg by causing its expulsion from the mother's womb before its birth. (Cfr Idem, 2.)

[9] **Suicide**: All cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result. Suicide has been condemned as necessarily immoral by most Western religions and also by many philosophers. It is argued that suicide defies the will of God, that it is socially harmful and that it is opposed to

Besides all those bad views concerning life, there are many other persons who showed and show their awareness of the fundamental and paramount aspect of life. Among them is GABRIEL Marcel. They argues that life is provided with a sacred character since only "the fact that no-one asks for life to come to him or to visit him is itself the most astonishing enigma and crudest paradox that man can experience."[1] From this conception of life, one can understand that life comes from the most Sacred Being and turn toward it. After this assertion, one can ask him/herself if something can be after this earthy life's horizons!

Along the history many thinkers tried to give their point of view concerning what happens after this life, and what one can be sure of is that no one of them can be considered as more true than other because no one came up from there to tell the living men what happens there. All, as we pretend to do it during this essay, were using the light of reason. This also shows the caliber of this study.

For Plato: "la vie du sage est méditation de la mort (life of a wise man is meditation on death)."[2] Due to the trepidation of dying, many persons, especially those who are at the last threshold of their earthly life, refund the necessity of thinking about life, its origin in general, and particularly its end, aim, expiration, etc. According to B. de SPINOZA, meditation on death is bound with meditation on life[3] since life and death do not exclude each other, and as HEGEL, one is the necessary condition of the other. Death is an event that arouses strong emotions and feelings that simply or even deeply force him/her to think about the whatness of life and about what arrives to someone when he/she dies.

The fact of being aware that everyone of us will at a given moment die, marks the first step that bring us to think and ask ourselves what follows after one's death. Can we affirm something after this life? If yes, is it knowable? If yes, what is it like? Is there life after this life? Saint Augustine in his *Confessions* is convinced that life does not end vainly in this life, since due to the man's nature, God created him for an eternal life with Him: "fescisti nos ad Te[Domine],et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te."[4] Many philosophical trends have been elaborated in that perspective of explaining what happens after one's death. Arphico-platonic doctrine founded on the dualism between the body and the soul[5] claims that death is no other thing than the end of earth troubles and not the end of life. All distresses still permitted as long as the hereafter kingdom realities escape our consciousness due to there is no possible return, but at least something is knowable: "All these obligations whose sanction is not of this present life, seem to belong to a different world, founded on kindness, scruples, sacrifice, a world entirely different from this one, a

'nature'. According to Kant, those who commit suicide 'degrade' humanity by treating themselves as things rather than as persons; furthermore, since they are the subject of moral acts, they 'root out' morality by removing themselves from the scene.(See Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Version 1.0, Routledge, London and New York 1998, 8383)

[1] J. NYASANI, *the meaning and implications of life and death in Africa: a psycho-philosophical reflection*, consolata institute of philosophy, Nairobi 2014, 4

[2] Cfr. S. AUROUX, « Les notions philosophiques », in *encyclopédie philosophique universelle*, II, Presse universitaire de France, Paris, 1990.1689

[3] Ibidem.

[4] AUGUSTINE, *The confessions*, I.1

[5] S. AUROUX, Op.cit. 1690

world whence we emerge to be born on this earth, before returning thither."[1] Can one overcome all those distresses?

Many others presented life as a form of inadequacy between the particular and the universal (Cfr. HEGEL etc.) to which death comes to put an end, hence losing its destructive character, on one side, and becoming an introit in a good life. What can be that good life like? Nowadays, many persons are not able to overcome the tragedy of death in order to have a look on what is behind it. They get lost in death's torment, invaded by the fear, and the sorrow, wondering only to know their last day! Still the determination of the moment one will die constitutes a philosophical, ethical, and technical difficult problem and mankind is day after day sinking in a deep anxiety, mainly due to his agitation about what happens after death. Can someone predict a kind of life there? This is the question that with GABRIEL Marcel, but also with other thinkers, we will try to examine along this essay!!

0.3. REASERCH METHODOLOGY

Enlightened by GABRIEL Marcel's thought through his works such as *Homo Viator, La dignite humaine, Being and Having, Mystery of intersubjectivity,* and the works of some others related to this topic about "life after life", we will use a critical reflection method. That is to mean, we will criticize, analyze, and try to compare marcelian thought with that of other thinkers about the topic.

0.4. THE SYNOPSIS OF THE WORK

In this short essay, from a general introductory part, we will go through chapter one, in which a brief biography of GABRIEL Marcel and a list of some of his works, as the principal author, will be presented. This part will help us to understand who GABRIEL Marcel was, and what influenced him to base his philosophy mainly on life and on human being in general. In chapter two, we will be concerned with the conception of Life in the philosophy of GABRIEL Marcel, and all that that concept can imply such as: its origins, purpose, its sacral character etc. It will be followed by chapter three about death as an ontological mystery and a bridge between two lives: Earth life and hereafter life. This will be followed by chapter four in which we will examine if by GABRIEL Marcel's philosophy, one can say: "life after life". Of course we will also give speech to some other philosophers' views, and finally a general conclusion will follow.

[1] M. GABRIEL, *Op.Cit.*

CHAP. I: THE AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY: LIFE AND WORKS OF GABRIEL Marcel

1.0. INTRODUCTION

At the very beginning of this work, it is necessary to begin by GABRIEL Marcel's biography, because his thought is tightly related to his life, and remarkably his life, especially his childhood, closely influenced his manner of thinking and all his remaining life! This will help us to well understand his position concerning this topic, as well as his conception of life as far as concerned. After a brief overfly of his life, we will try to identify some of his works because as one of the greatest thinkers the world has known, his life, of course, has been marked by works, writings etc. since "Verba volant, scripta manent"[1]

1.1. LIFE OF GABRIEL Marcel

According to Roger TROIS-FONTAIN, in his book "*De l'existence de l'être, la philosophie de Gabriel Marcel*"[2], Gabriel Honoré Marcel, a French Roman Catholic, and existentialist philosopher, dramatist, and critic, was born on the 7th December 1889 in Paris as it is also found in Gabriel's own book "*en chemin vers quel éveil*". GABRIEL Marcel lost his mother when he was only four, and he was raised by his father and maternal aunt, who became later his step-mother. Even though his father and aunt married, Marcel never forgot the loss of his mother and his childhood loneliness, what can make us understand the reason why in his later writings, he occasionally reflected upon this loss and once referred to his childhood as a "desolate universe."

Despite all those difficulties of his youth, Marcel excelled in school and performed at the highest academic level. At the university, he received a rigorous training in philosophy; the reason why in 1910, he obtained the aggregation in philosophy at only 21 years old, an age that was unusual in those times. He has been married to Jacqueline BOEGNER, who not only has been his beloved spouse, but also the most loyal, and the most enlightened collaborator, and supporter, even though he was to lose her in 1947. After passing his aggregation in 1910, he taught philosophy intermittently in Sens, Paris, and after he went at Montpellier, where his main professional occupations, however, were that of drama critic (for *Europe nouvelle* and later for *Nouvelles littéraires*), and editor (for the *Feux croisés* series at Plon). Initially Marcel was drawn to philosophical idealism[3], particularly the work of Schelling, F. H. Bradley, and the American philosopher Josiah ROYCE. The first Word War and its impact however, greatly shifted Marcel's thinking. During the war he served as a Red Cross official and his duties included relaying information about missing soldiers to the next of their kin. The brutal realities of the war and Marcel's willingness to reflect upon them led him to turn away from idealism and all philosophical systems which did not take into account the fundamental "brokenness" of the world. It was through this notion of "a broken world" that Marcel directed his studies, both as a playwright and as a philosopher.

[1] A Latin proverb that means: Speeches evaporate whereas writings do not vanish.
[2] R. TROIS-FONTAINES, *De l'existence de l'être, la philosophie de GABRIEL Marcel*, Vol.I, Lousane et l'âge d'homme, Louvain et Paris, 1985[2],
[3] Idealism: Any philosophical position claiming that ideas are the true objects of knowledge, that ideas are prior to things, and that ideas provide the grounds of being to things. (Cfr. B. NICHOLAS AND Y.JIYUAN, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, Blackwell publishing, Victoria 2004, 322)

The premature loss and absence of his precious wife became somehow, the basis and origin of his thought since it certainly account for his complete rejection of idealism, which according to Marcel shirks the problem of the evil especially its tragic aspect. He was convinced that death is particularly for our beloved ones.[1]

Gabriel Marcel has been very shaken by the death of his wife in a such manner that almost all his remaining life, and his career have been marked by an orientation toward humankind, and in turn, led to his inquiries into basic existential themes, which were aspects of reality that cannot be neatly categorized within an abstract system: "I never forgot my promenade with my aunt [his step-mother on the other side], when I was almost 7 or 8 years old, [a promenade] along which my aunt having told me that we cannot know if dead ones extinguished or survive otherwise, I cried subsequently: 'I will search and know'"[2]. This shows how GABRIEL Marcel could not support to live in the agnosticism[3] of his birth place.

Raised as an atheist, his thought throughout his thirties had turned in a more religious direction, but it was after the French Catholic writer Francois Mauriac posed the question to him, "But after all, why are you not one of us?" that Marcel converted to Catholicism in 1929, being forty years old, even though he never intended to be a philosopher representing the Catholic Church along his philosophical way.

After the war, Marcel taught at a number of secondary schools, and often taught in universities, such as the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, the Sorbonne in Paris, and Harvard University. Marcel however, earned also a considerable income as a playwright, editor, and critic working as a drama critic for various literary journals and serving as an editor for Plon, the major French Catholic publisher. He was often surprised and frustrated that his plays received so little attention, even though he would become better known for his philosophical work than his plays, without forgetting the fact that the idea of dialogue, which was of primary importance in his philosophy, held a practical as well as theoretical place in Marcel's life. By his habit of hosting "Friday evenings," a weekly discussion group, he met and influenced important young French philosophers, like Jean Wahl, Jean Paul SARTRE, Paul RICOEUR, and Emmanuel LEVINAS.

Along his life, Marcel continued his work as a playwright and drama critic. Through his plays he explored various human situations in all their intensity and complexity and remarkably the common theme in his dramatic works was the interpersonal dynamics in family situations where tensions emerged due to the struggle between carrying out one's duties while striving to fulfill personal aspirations. He believed that music, above all could tap into and express this ontological mystery, the reason why, finally, Marcel was an accomplished musician and composer. In his philosophical reflection, Marcel distinguished

[1] Cfr. M. GABRIEL's conversation with Leon BRUNSCHVICG on the concern of death during the congress on DESCARTES(1936)

[2] Cfr. M. GABRIEL, *La dignité humaine et ses assises existentielles*, Aubier, Paris 1962, 43

[3] **Agnosticism:** a position that neither believes that God exists nor believes that God does not exist and denies that we can have any knowledge about the nature of God. (Cfr. B. NICHOLAS AND Y. JIYUAN, *op.cit.* 20 ; see also W. L. ROWE, "Agnosticism", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London and New York: Routledge 1998, 137).

between two ways of attaining knowledge: The first was to consider it as a problem, the approach in which the scientist tries to understand something through the method of abstraction, a kind of analysis in which one dissects, abstracts, and separates, and which Marcel called primary reflection. The second for Marcel was a form of secondary reflection. This kind of reflection approaches the subject not as a problem[1] but as a mystery[2], and doing so it unites rather than separates, similarly to the method of phenomenology[3] even though by after Marcel rejected the more formal or systematic method of phenomenology developed by Edmund HUSSERL and employed rather a more natural or personal kind of reflection. Marcel's philosophical methodology was unique, although it bears some resemblance to both existentialism[4] and phenomenology broadly construed. He insisted that philosophy begin with concrete experience rather than abstractions. The method itself consists in "working…up from life to thought and then down from thought to life again, so that [one] may try to throw more light upon life" [5]

One of Marcel's greatest philosophical contributions in employing his descriptive, personal style of analysis was in the realm of ethics and intersubjectivity. He was convinced that when one treats the being of another as a mystery, one does so with a sense of humility ("ontological humility") by which we can be able to recognize the fundamental dignity of the other. Marcel also analyzed the phenomenon of hope. Like other existential thinkers, he tried to make the distinction between fear and dread, and was convinced that fear is to be afraid of some particular thing or object, whereas dread is the basic existential anxiety or angst one feels apart from fearing any specific thing. Dread, then, is one of the fundamental ways of relating to the world. In a similar contrast, Marcel distinguished between desire and hope, arguing that desire is the fact of wanting or seeking some particular thing or object while hope is an open-ended expectation in which one anticipates without knowing exactly what he is waiting or hoping for is. It is here that Marcel's analyses take a specifically religious, and even Christian, form, in that such hope, he believes, is not something one can dictate or create by oneself alone. Rather, it is a grace which one receives. In his own words, "the only genuine hope is hope in what does not depend on us, hope springing from humility and not from pride"[6]

In addition, Marcel expressed a refreshing preference for philosophizing in ordinary language. He was convinced that "we should employ current forms of ordinary language

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[1] **Problem:** Cfr. The distinction between the mysterious and the problematic in: M. GABRIEL, *Being and Having* (translated by K. FARRER), Dacre press, westminister 1949, 100

[2] Cfr. Idem

[3] Cfr. B. NICHOLAS AND Y.JIYUAN, *op.cit.* 516

[4] Existentialism: A philosophical movement or tendency, emphasizing individual existence, freedom, and choice, that influenced many diverse writers in the 19th and 20th centuries. As a type of philosophy, existentialism began with the works of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, although the term "existentialism" was introduced by the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel at the end of the Second World War. At that time, existentialism became a major philosophical movement in continental Europe. It grew from hostility toward the modern rationalism that characterized the Age of Reason. (Cfr. Dreyfus, Hubert L. "Existentialism." Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008. ; see also B. NICHOLAS AND Y.JIYUAN, *op.cit.* 238).

[5] Cfr. M. GABRIEL, *The Mystery of Being, Vol.1, Reflection and Mystery.* (translation of G. S. Fraser), The Harvill Press, London,1951, 41

[6] Cfr. M. GABRIEL, *the Philosophy of Existentialism.* (translation of Manya Harari), Carol Publishing Group, New York, 1995, 32

which distort our experiences far less than the elaborate expressions in which philosophical language is crystallized"[1]. GABRIEL Marcel biologically speaking died in 1973, but he philosophically never died because three decades after his death, Marcel's philosophy continues to generate a steady stream of creative scholarship that, if modest in volume, nevertheless attests to his continued relevance for the contemporary philosophical landscape, offering rich possibilities for dialogue with contemporary ontologies struggling to address the problem of "being" without succumbing to ethical "violence" or "ontotheological" conceptions of God.

1.2. WORKS OF GABRIEL Marcel

As a one of the notable catholic thinkers, GABRIEL Marcel has many works that show and irradiate his thought. Two years before his conversion (i.e. in 1927), Marcel wrote *le journal métaphysique*, a book that later in 1952 has been translated into *Metaphysical Journal,* Rockliff, London; by Bernard Wall, as a diary of early reflections on Marcel's staple themes of mystery and human relationships. In 1933, Marcel published "On the Ontological Mystery", a seminal essay on the distinction between the 'problems' addressed by science and the 'mysteries' explored by existential philosophy, which in 1949, has been translated by M. Harari into *The Philosophy of Existence,* Harvill, London 1949. In 1935, he wrote *être et avoir: philosophie de l'ésprit,* Aubier, Paris; which, like the *Metaphysical Journal*, is a loose collection of reflections on human experience and relations. It has been translated by Katharine Farrer into *Being and Having: An Existentialist Diary*, Dacre, London, 1949.

In 1940, Marcel wrote *Du refus à l'invocation*, Gallimard Paris, his most thorough discussion of the theme of 'availability'; a book that will be translated with an introduction by Robert Rosthal into *Creative Fidelity*, Noonday, New York in 1964. GABRIEL Marcel wrote also, in 1945, *Homo Viator: prolégomènes à une métaphysique de l'espérance*, Aubier, Paris; Focusing on the intimations of the eternal and the divine which are to be found in our everyday lives. It is, in 1965, that it has been translated into *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope* (3rd edition), Harper & Row, New York, by Emma Crawford. In 1950, Marcel published *Le Mystère de l'être*, 2 volumes. Aubier, Paris ; which are Marcel's Gifford Lectures of 1949-1950 and are the most complete representation of his increasingly religious concerns. The two have been separately translated into *The Mystery of Being*, vol. 1, *Reflection and Mystery*, Harvill, London, 1950 by G. S. Fraser, and *The Mystery of Being*, vol. 2, *Faith and Reality* Harvill, London 1951, by René Hague. Beside these already mentioned works, Marcel also wrote *La dignité humaine et ses assises existentielles*, Aubier Montaigne, Paris which has been translated into *The Existential Background of Human Dignity*, MA: Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1963 as Marcel's William James Lectures at Harvard in 1961-2; the most socially and politically aware of Marcel's works. He wrote also *Le déclin de la sagesse*, Plon, Paris 1954, and *l'homme problématique*, Aubier, Paris, 1955, which has been translated into *Problematic Man*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1967; *Présence et immortalité*, Flammarion, Paris 1959 which Michael A. Machado Translated into *Presence and Immortality* Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh in 1967; *Pour une sagesse tragique et son au-délà*, Plon, Paris 1968 that has been translated into

[1] Cfr. M. GABRIEL, *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope*, Harper & Row, New York, 1965[3],158

Tragic Wisdom and Beyond, Northwestern University Press by Stephen Jolin and Peter McCormick in 1973. One cannot forget works like: *L'homme contre humain,* la colombe, Paris 1951; *l'heure théâtrale*, Plon, Paris 1959; *Persée vers ailleur*, Fayard, Paris 1959; *En chemin vers quel éveil?*, Gallimard, Paris, 1971; *Plus décisive que la violence*, Plon, Paris 1971.

GABRIEL Marcel has had many personal works, but also many others works has been attributed to him for different reasons; the reason why to tell of his works is not an easy task. Here are others works said to be of him that we found only their translations:

G. Marcel, *Philosophical Fragments 1909–1914 and the Philosopher and Peace*. With an introduction by Lionel A. Blain, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1965;

_____, *Man Against Mass Society*. Translated by G. S. Fraser, Henry Regnery Company, Chicago 1962[2]

_____ , *Searchings*, Paulist Newman Press, New York, 1967

_____ , *Thou Shall Not Die*. Translated by Katherine Rose Hanley., Saint Agustine's Press, South Bend. 2009.

_____ , *The Philosophy of Existentialism.* Translated by Manya Harari, Carol Publishing Group, New York 1995.

Etc.

Chapter II. LIFE

2.0. INTRODUCTION

"The divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the felling of absurdity."[1] A serious reflection about life implies many things, not easy to understand. This is the reason why many authors are afraid or do not like to hold a talk on it. You cannot, for example talk of life without you say something about its origin, its purpose, its end, death, and many other subjects that are not easy to fully explore as long as:

> *None asks for life to come to him or visit him […], [and as] none chooses to house or accommodate life. Something strange and extraordinary must necessarily be [concerned] with this phenomenon, and yet few people would care or talk about it or even question about its intrusiveness on us[2].*

Life is like a common terrain to all humans[3] since it is a question that each and every human being asks himself/ herself and tries to answer somehow, of course raising trepidation and hope[4]. In the ordinary language, life may be described as the state or quality of being there or existing and which distinguishes living beings from dead being or inorganic matter and that is characterized by metabolic processes such as growth, reproduction, production of energy etc. Nowadays humankind suffers from these two emotions (trepidation and hope) because the problem of life is exigent, scary. Remarkably, life does not end by the earth journey, the reason why, the improvements that sciences and technology are achieving can never solve this problem. The problem complexity is also shown by the fact that life in this world is intrinsically related to death[5], where each being lives of the destruction of the other being, without forgetting that life does not go on without sufferings. Along this chapter we are going to speculate on the meaning of life in the philosophy of GABRIEL Marcel, The genesis of life, the purpose of life, the master of life, and at its end the sacra character of life. We will not of course go far the thought of GABRIEL Marcel, but we will not also ignore other thinkers' conceptions on this subject.

This is a task that is not easy, but at least it is certain that we cannot talk of life unless we have undergone the experience of actually having lived it, in the same way that Heidegger contended that one cannot adequately talk of death unless he has experienced it himself[6]. At the beginning of this chapter, it is good to remind that all we will be talking and analyzing is about life in general, but mainly human life as concerned since human life is very different from other living beings due to the type of life that characterizes him: a life conscious of herself as a being able to take distant from its life so as to read and rejoin it after so as to reorient it[7].

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[1] Cfr.: A. CAMUS, *The Myth of Sisyphus*
[2] Cfr.: J. NYASANI, *Op. Cit.*, 4
[3] Cfr.: L. SULLEROT, *le problème de la vie devant la raison et le Catholicisme*, Publiroc, Marseille, 1947, 26
[4] Cfr.: Idem, 28
[5] Cfr.: Idem, 34
[6] Cfr.: J. NYASANI, *Op. Cit.*
[7] Cfr. : G. CANGUILHEM, *La connaissance de la vie*, Paris 1969, 116.

2.1. THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

At the beginning of this sub point, one cannot not ask himself what is meant by the term "origin". As our sub point concerned, one must understand "origin" as that from which, a thing first comes to be, or where each thing would best be originated. In this sense it can be also understood as the ultimate principle or the first cause by/from which a thing came into being. Does life have origin? If yes, which can it be? Such is the problem that no science neither solve nor can solve because it the tentative to solve it bring us beyond the sensible, and only reason can try to explore that domain whereas senses remain impotent. Such is the perspective in which we are going to carry our work.

The conceptions of life and the world which we call "philosophical" are a product of two factors: one, inherited from religious and ethical conceptions; the other, the sort of investigation which may be called "scientific," using this word in its broadest sense. The origin of life however constitutes the most intractable and difficult subject in this universe because to talk about it presupposes knowledge of it, a knowledge that no man can pretend to fully possess. A talk about life implies many things, not easy to understand, so that many authors are afraid to hold a talk on it, even though the postmodernism we are living nowadays does not also allow man to have a reflection on the meaning of his life. As Roger TROISFONTAINES argues it:

> *"The difficulties we encounter when we try to explore that domain comes mainly from the fact that sciences (in their essence) cannot overstep the limits encountered, even the embryology carried at its very perfection point that one can imagine today, is not able to offer to us a little elucidation about ultimate origin"*[1].

Those difficulties induced many persons in a reduction of all that we observe to a simple manifestation under pretense that nothing can permit the understanding of their innermost dynamism. One sleeps and wakes up with zeal to take of the other's life or even his, because he/she does not understand what does mean life. He/she consider life as a simple means as one can own a car, a house, etc. That spectacle generated to the scientists, technicians, etc., the ambition or more precisely the dream of manufacturing life in coming time.

The problem of the origin of life has been discussed from long ago till nowadays. Since all the antiquity, the medieval period and a great part of modern period, the general trend of philosophers and many science's men was to consider life as a single phenomenon, natural and non-reducible to the matter. Many hypotheses have been elaborated. Even though there have been a great number of such hypotheses, the only certain thing nowadays is that scientific hypotheses cannot provide the true origin of life. According to actual scientific hypotheses, life has not always existed on the Earth. Some admit that, life evolved from minerals, but this creates many difficulties if asked to explain how the living can evolve from the non-living with remarkable differences they show. Normally the difference between the living and the non-living does not consist in their materials from

[1] Cfr.: R. TROIS-FONTAINE, *Op. Cit.*, 131

which they are constituted, but rather in the way these materials are organized[1]. It is then understandable that this hypothesis is weak to respond satisfactorily to this question.

Another scientific hypothesis proposed the extra-terrestrial origin of life: "Penspermia[2]" in Greek. This hypothesis, instead of resolving the problem, adjourns it. It let the problem entirely unresolved because if we admit that life came from another planet, we will be always obliged to explain how it evolved to that planet![3]

The hypothesis of spontaneous generation[4] has been thought potent a while, but the scientist Pasteur showed that it also is not efficacious. Pasteur's experience showed that the type of life that appear on meat in time of rottenness or over some juice after their transformation into alcohol for example, does not evolve from that meat or that juice, but it is a testimony and a result of the micro-organisms presence in the air. He concluded that the living being can only come into being only from another living being. This spontaneous synthesis of life, from the pure inert matter without a special intellect intervention at least to assemble elements tarry hypothetical.

Besides those and other scientific hypothesis on the origin of life such as direct creation by God (which is nowadays accepted even by many men of sciences), the hazardous generation or evolution[5] etc., many individual philosophers have also differed widely in regard to the origin of life on the Earth, but also in regard of the origin of the all things we see in general. During the antiquities, their answers to this problem were not far from the scientific propositions we come to mention above, because they also almost suggested the origin of things from others things; conceptions that, on one hand, cannot resolve completely the problem (as some of scientists), but, one the other hand, cannot be taken as useless, because using reason they have at least waken up many minds.

Among Ionian[6] thinkers, Thales suggested water as the origin of every living thing[7] because he has perceived that almost all living things are composed by water, but this suggestion did not solve the problem because one can ask himself where this water came from. "The statement that everything is made of water is to be regarded as a scientific hypothesis, and by no means a foolish one because twenty years ago, the received view was that everything is made of hydrogen, which is two thirds of water"[8].

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[1] Cfr.: R. BOIGEROT, *l'homme et l'univers: leur origine, leur destin*, Edition du Renouveau, Bruxelles, 1946, 34

[2] **A theory of origin of life:** a theory that states that the universe is full of spores that germinate when they find a favorable environment

[3] Cfr.: R. BOIGEROT, *Op. Cit.*, 36

[4] Cfr.: Idem, 37

[5] That theory's supporters are convinced that there is neither plan nor purpose in nature, all are result of hazard.

[6] **IONIA:** ancient district in what is now Turkey, comprising the central portion of the west coast of Asia Minor, together with the adjacent islands. The region received its name from the Ionians, Greeks who emigrated from the mainland of Greece probably before 1000 BC. The first Greek philosophers lived in the Ionia region especially those from Babylonia. Among them are Thales and Anaximander, who lived in the 6th century BC, Pythagoras, who also lived in the 6th century B.C etc. (Cfr. Martin, Thomas R. "Ancient Greece." Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.)

[7] B. RUSSELL, *The history of western philosophy and Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, Simon and Schuster Inc., New York 1945, 20

[8] Idem, 23

After him came a younger contemporary and pupil of Thales called Anaximander, a savant who made the first map of the world and of the stars, and invented both a sundial and an all-weather clock[1]. According to him,

> "*The basic element of everything, he maintained, could be neither water nor fire, nor anything similar, or else it would gradually take over the universe. It had to be something with no definite nature, which he called the 'infinite' or 'unlimited'. 'The infinite is the first principle of things that exist: it is eternal and ageless, and it contains all the worlds.'"*[2]

This has been a very important step in regard of the origin of things, among which we can also understand life, even though life is not a thing, but at least it resolved some of the questions that man can have, and we hope that if nowadays men would consider life in this sense, even though itself present some weaknesses, they cannot abuse it as they want. By this hypothesis, Anaximander also argues that life (by reference to human life) has not always existed, hence the hypothesis that life has had an origin[3] even though he didn't dig deep to clarify the true origin[4]. He argues that only one thing does not have origin, being the origin of other things:

> *Anaximander's paradox is, does each thing have an origin? He answers no: there is an infinite being that sustains everything else but which is not grounded in any other thing. Anaximander's reasoning can be reconstructed as an escape from an infinite regress: There are some things that now exist but have not always existed. Anything which has a beginning owes its existence to another thing that existed before it. Therefore, there is something that lacks an origin.*[5]

What is that thing that lacks origin? After Anaximander, Xenophon came introduced a new conception about this question, but also his argumentation seems the continuation of Anaximander's argument! He came with the argument of God, arguing that "because God is the most powerful of all things[…], God cannot have an origin[…] and God is neither infinite nor finite[…], alone he[God] governs all there is"[6]. Xenophon argumentation was that except God, all other thing and creatures has necessarily an origin and God, as the most powerful of all things, is the origin of them. Heraclitus however did not overstep the challenge of the question because the fire he proposed as the origin of all things does not come from nothing. It must have an ultimate origin.

Except Plato, who was convinced that all things we see in this world (of course life included) are images of the true ones that are in the world of ideas, and that that ideas' world is from up above; almost all the primitive philosophers do not consider, as the first principal or origin of all things, other thing than material principle of the nature. For Aristotle, a thing must have four causes to come into existence such as material, efficient, formal and final cause, but a deep analysis reveal that none of them is the true origin or the ultimate cause of the considered thing. For a wood chair, he argues that: that

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[1] A. KENNY, *an Illustrated Brief History of Western philosophy,* Blackwell publishing, Victoria 2006,4
[2] Idem, 4
[3] Ibidem
[4] He stopped on the affirmation that human embryos grew to puberty in fish-like animals before bursting into the World. (Cfr.: Ibidem)
[5] Cfr.: R. SORENSEN, *a brief history of the Paradox philosophy and the labyrinths of the mind*, Oxford University Press, New York 2003, 10
[6] A. KENNY, *Op. Cit.*, 6

wood is the material cause, the carpenter it's efficient cause, etc. but all of them also have the origin from which they come from.

During the medieval period, things changed totally. God, as the creator of all that is, took the first place in human mind and day to day life. Generally, being the center in all things, God was regarded as the maker, the origin and the principle cause of life especially human life as concerned. Convinced that the human being is composed of the body and the "anima (the soul)" as the principle of life, and that this "anima" cannot be of this Earth because if it was so, it would be difficult to explain why all things of the Earth do not have that principle, they concluded that this "anima" is and must be from the Up by means of a most intelligent Being. Many thinkers and philosophers of that time such as Saint Augustine, Saint Anselm through his proofs of God existence[1], Saint Thomas Aquinas[2],etc. did not cease to proof that life comes from God and man has been created by God in the light of unaided reason. This hypothesis of direct creation by God has been the more influential even for many men of science and has been considerably reaffirmed by the scientists of the contemporary period.

Through the times that came after the medieval period, things changed considerably. God is no longer the center in all things. The theocentric conception of the universe has been replaced by the anthropocentrism[3], and man seemingly took the place that was God's. Many philosophical doctrines such as empiricism[4], rationalism[5], agnosticism[6], nihilism[7] etc. have been elaborated and developed. Many of them put aside the role of God in the universe, hence denying the nobility of human life as God originated thing. This denial attained its acme by the F. Nietzsche's proclamation of God's death, an affair that started by the works of LUDWING Feuerbach, KARL Marx etc. forgetting that by God's death, the man cannot also, by his essence, continue to live, since he receives life from God, the only Living Being by His own. By Karl RAHNER and his colleagues, it was the time of Personalism. Almost as the medieval period thinkers, the origin of man is from up above, the fact that confers to him a special dignity than other created things.

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[1] **Saint Anselm:** Cfr. J. HOPKINS, "Anselm of Canterbury", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London and New York: Routledge 1998, 376

[2] Cfr.: Thomas AQUINAS, *Soumma Theologica*, I, q.2, a.3

[3] **Anthropocentrism**: a trend in opposition to theocentrism (God in the center of the universe) that stipulates that humans reside at the center of the enclosed universe (For more reading See *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London and New York: Routledge 1998, 2863)

[4] **Empiricism**: A philosophical approach to knowledge and reality. Its central contentions are that all knowledge or all meaningful discourse about the world is related to sensory experience (including inner sense or introspection), and that the boundaries of possible sense-experience are the boundaries of possible knowledge. (Cfr. B. NICHOLAS and Y.JIYUAN, *Op.Cit.*, 208)

[5] **Rationalism**: A philosophical trend taken as an epistemological approach that gives a lesser role to sense-experience and emphasizes the centrality of the faculty of reason itself in knowledge. (Cfr. Idem, 584)

[6] **Agnosticism**: In the popular sense, an agnostic is someone who neither believes nor disbelieves in God, whereas an atheist disbelieves in God. In the strict sense, however, agnosticism is the view that human reason is incapable of providing sufficient rational grounds to justify either the belief that God exists or the belief that God does not exist. (For more reading, see W. L. ROWE, "Agnosticism", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London and New York: Routledge 1998, 137).

[7] **Nihilism :** As its name implies (from Latin nihil, 'nothing'), philosophical nihilism is a philosophy of negation, rejection, or denial of some or all aspects of thought or life. Ethical nihilism rejects the existence of moral knowledge by denying that there are moral facts or moral truths to be known. (Cfr. B. NICHOLAS and Y.JIYUAN, Op.Cit., 225)

According to Gabriel Marcel as well as concerned, our being is a condition for our life and is constantly in jeopardy. we have philosophically to accept that man is not only material, but that being the only living being able to think about his life particularly and life in general, he is also the soul "spiritus incarnatus"[1]. This faculty that man owns supposes necessarily the transcendence. This idea of transcendence in marcelian philosophy let us understand that like many thinkers of medieval period, GABRIEL Marcel admit that due to the fact that the soul is the principle of the life, and that this soul cannot be of this earth, life is necessarily from up above, from a necessarily Being, that lives by itself, the Being that saint Thomas of Aquinas named "ESSE IPSUM SUBSISTENS". It is this non-contingent Being that Marcel guarantees the identification of God. He support the philosophically accepted conception which states that the Ultimate principle of life (anima) cannot be of here below since it could not be understandable how only a part of matter (i.e. only living one and not both the whole matter) is endowed of life, but from up above by means of an Intelligent Being (hypothesis of Direct creation by God).

In nutshell, among elaborated hypothesis concerning the origin of life, the hypothesis of direct creation by God is more convincing one since "create" means make, extract, realize etc. from nothing; and only the all-powerful hand of God is able of it since "life is provided with a sacred character and since only "the fact that no-one asks for life to come to him or to visit him is itself the most astonishing enigma and crudest paradox that man can experience."[2]

2.2. WHAT DOES LIFE MEAN IN MARCELIAN PHILOSOPHY?

As we have just mentioned it above, GABRIEL Marcel argues that the ultimate principle of our life (anima) is not from here below, but from up above, from an intelligent being that he identifies to God. This help us to understand that in Marcelian philosophic understanding, life is endowed of a sacred character so that none has right to mistreat or abuse it. Life means participation to the Being of God[3] but also our life time is in necessary connection with death and the being of others since "I establish myself as a person in so far as I really believe in the existence of others and allow this belief to influence my conduct"[4]; hence life is in vertical relation towards God by participation, a relation that is opposed to the necessary connection to death since life calls death willingly or not, and a horizontal relation with a neighbor whom is in my likeness. To live for GABRIEL Marcel is to undergo and to manage all those relations since, centrally to the superficial thinkers "the less life is experienced as a captivity, the […][more] the soul [anima] will be able to see the shinning of that veiled mysterious light, which […] illumines the very Centre of hope's dwelling-place"[5]

[1] R.TROIS-FONTAINES, *Op. Cit.*, 299
[2] J. NYASANI, *Op. Cit.*, 4
[3] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, *being and having*, Dacre press, Westminster 1949, 37
[4] Idem, *Homo Viator*, Henry REGNERY Company, Chicago1951, 22
[5] Idem, 32

In Marcel's philosophy, life results from the act of creation and only God is able for this action. Man as an incarnated being, must his life from up above. Life is of the mystery category[1], but also human person's life is "co-presence". For GABRIEL Marcel, by my life, other things also get life since they are things as I perceive them. He is convinced that if the link between the world and human existence is cut off, that world becomes no longer the world as such but an illusion, a long documentaries' film offered to my curiosity which will vanish soon due to the fact of ignoring me. My existence is not separated neither from the world's one nor from the others' because "to exist is to be necessarily with others"[2], and when others are no longer there, I also do not exist for I cannot give to myself life that others do not have: they are part of my substance[3]. My life is participation to the life of a Necessarily living Being, and it is a fight because to live is to pursue a hopeless forces trial[4], a resistance of destructive forces.

2.3. THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

Among the main characteristics of all that is, is the purpose for which something or someone is or exist. Life also as a true reality that is, has and must have a purpose which permit it to be meaningful. For FRIEDRICH Nietzsche, life is the act of growing up, as a non-interruptible becoming and is characterized by a movement which has clear-cut properties. This movement cannot come from outside but inside and hence spontaneous but also not totally spontaneous since the act of living is not the absolute beginning of all the points of life. It depends however on other conditions and it does not precede the being. If we consider that this movement is immanent (a movement that remains in itself)[5], we find that that being is the end (purpose) of its own action, but also that that immanence is not absolute because considering it as a movement, we find ourselves encountering the Aristotle's fundamental principle of movement: "quid quid movetur ab alio movetur (all that moves is set in motion by another)"[6], and due to this, the Unmoved Mover cannot be a contingent as the moving being, and hence not of this earth since if it was as such it cannot be the Unmoved mover. Because of his spiritual dimension, man's life is very different from that of other animals, and hence from up-above.

Having affirmed the up-above origin of life, its purpose also must refer to that to that Intelligent Being. God's purpose by choice is the sole source of meaning, with the existence of an afterlife not necessary for it. If a person failed to do what God intends him to do with his life, then, on the current view, his life would be meaningless. Along the time, many hypotheses have been created denying the existence of the purpose in nature for living beings, searching to explain life and its evolution till man by only referring to physic-chemical causes and to fortuitous and casual events. Those theories had in common, the

[1]Cfr.: Idem, 100
[2] Cfr.: Idem, *Journal Métaphysique*, Gallimard, Paris 1927, 235
[3] Cfr.: Idem, *Présence et immortalité*, Flammarion, Paris 1959, 22, 132
[4] Cfr.: Idem, 147
[5]Cfr.: DAN COHN-SHERBOK, "Transcendence and immanence", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, Routledge, London and New York 1998, 931,
[6] Aristote, *Physique*, GF Flammarion, Paris 2002, VII, 1

fact that there is no rule and no preferential orientation or the purpose. A world conceived as such however, cannot be other thing than a chaos, a vulgus because there cannot be stable and living combination. Formed by hazard, hazardilly also they will be destroyed. In the world that is ours however, living beings are not only formed but also maintained and develop into always complex and improved forms, which implies that the formation and evolution of living being is not the result of a pure hazard action.

Many views concerning the purpose of life have been elaborated, but what is common to all animals is to stay alive and for humans it is in general to stay alive and live happily. Every living, especially humans, all that they do in nature is to stay alive. More than anybody else, Plato and Aristotle are convinced that the central purpose of human life is "happiness". For Plato, human life purpose is to live happily in the city[1]. Aristotle is convinced however that that happiness, which he takes as a purpose of life, depends on the cultivation of virtue. He support that a genuinely happy life requires the fulfillment of a broad range of conditions including physical as well as mental well-being and that virtue is achieved by maintaining the mean (i.e. the balance between two excesses). In his *Nicomachean ethics*, Aristotle is convinced that the purpose of human existence is happiness, something "that which is always desirable in itself and never for the sake of something else"[2]. This Aristotle's view is somehow true since everyone can easily realize that in our daily life we desire money, pleasure, honor etc. only because we believe them to make us happy, and seem to be means towards obtaining happiness, while happiness is always an end in itself. This kind of happiness must be different from pleasure, as Aristotle argues, because "for as it is not one swallow or one fine day that makes a spring, so it is not one day or a short time that makes a man blessed and happy."[3], and Happiness is the perfection of human nature. Since man is a rational animal, human happiness depends on the exercise of his reason.

During medieval period however, all is centered on God, but medieval thinkers do not propose the purpose of human life far from Aristotle one. They only tried to show how Aristotelian purpose of life is achieved only in God. For saint Augustine, the true happiness is fund in God as he claimed: "fescisti nos ad Te[Domine],et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te (you made us for you Lord and our heart will never rest unless in You)"[4]. The human soul along man's life is on the search of the happy rest, and this cannot be achieved elsewhere except in being with God. For saint Thomas Aquinas, every human being is on the quest for the good life and his good life is achieved only by the participation to the existence of the ESSE IPSUM SUBSISTENS (the Being that is by itself)[5]. The modern period however, is the period of changes in all directions. It is the period during which, all conceptions about the universe changed from theocentrism to anthropocentrism, etc. Man took the first place on the field of thought, but also human life underwent debasement and

[1] Cfr.: PLATON, *La république,* «Belles Lettres», Paris 1932, 369b-372c, 586e
[2] Aristotle, *Nicomachean ethics*, 1097a30-34
[3] Idem, 1098a18
[4] AUGUSTINE, *The confessions*, I.1
[5] Cfr.: T. HIBBS, *Aquinas ethics and philosophy of religion, metaphysics and practice,* Indiana university press, Bloomington 2007, 117- 134.

has been treated as having no sense and without purpose, reducing it to machinery mechanism.

During the contemporary period, human life has been revisited and some doctrines were created such as personalism[1], humanism[2] etc. for many thinkers of this period, mainly the 20th century, human being is essentially and necessarily a living being by excellence because his life and his being are essentially identical. Man however, is not an accomplished project, the reason why human life purpose is to get perfection. For Marcel GABRIEL, due to his openness to the Absolute as a spiritual being, human life tends to overcome and to go beyond of all that already is acquired and beyond himself: "I tend to establish myself as a person in so far as I assume responsibility for my acts and so behave as a real being [and] I establish myself as a person in so far as I really believe in the existence of others and allow this belief to influence my conduct"[3].

In nutshell, God in His goodness includes all goodnesses, and thus is the good of all good. Being good by essence, all other beings tend towards Him by participation since nothing can be called good except inasmuch as it bears some likeness to the divine goodness[4], the reason why it is said of God that there came to me all good things along with it (Wisd.7, 11), and all tend towards Him.

2.4. THE MASTER OF LIFE

The concept "master" is, in daily life used as a qualification of someone who has the needed knowledge in a particular domain so that he can easily communicate the content to others. In medieval period, the owner of a slave or the employer of a servant is also called the master. In trades and the martial arts, a master is one who has reached the highest level of skill[5].

Remarkably, the concept "master" has had almost similar signification, but in our essays, we will be occupied by the concept "Master" instead of "master" because capitalization here means more and changes more. As long as life is concerned, this will no longer be someone with a high level of skill only, but the one who can and has full skill and control over life in general and human life in particular. Does this Master exist? If yes, who is he like? According to the 125th poem of Friedrich NIETZSCHE' *Gay science*, God who was considered as the first principle and purpose of life (as we mentioned it above), is dead. As long as life is concerned, the proclamation of God's death is not nothing because if God we affirmed as the origin and principle of life is dead, life also is meaningless and consequently life is no longer.

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[1] Cfr.: K. E. YANDELL, "Personalism", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, Routledge, London and New York 1998, 6433

[2] Cfr.: J.C. LUIK, "Humanism", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, Routledge, London and New York 1998, 3672

[3] M. GABRIEL, *Homo Viator*, *Op. Cit.*, 22

[4] Cfr.: Thomas Aquinas, *Of God and his Creatures, An Annotated Translation of the Summa Contra Gentiles,* Grand Rapids, London 1905, 63

[5] "Master." Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.

Despite all those affirmation, life is. We must and have to affirm the isness of life, since at least I and you who is reading this essay or having it in your hand are. Otherwise we all, I and you are dead, we don't live. This life of ours cannot be a hazard's fruit and cannot be of no purpose as we affirmed it above. Life is a process between our beginning (at our conception) and our death[1]. Considering the complexness and strength of that process, there must be someone or something that master it and hold a full control on it, guiding it from its origin towards its end. Whom can be this Master?

Friedrich NIETZSCHE by his nihilistic vision of the world wrote in his *Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra*[2], that after God has disappeared, man must become his own god. The superman (the new state of humanity, able to transcend towards terrestrial world) has to live and has to impose above like a law his own will. Can this superman be the Master we are searching for? Of course not. The nietzschean superman cannot be the Master of life because even though he is the superman, he stills having humankind properties and characteristics including that of being-toward death[3] despite the fact of being at a super level. The Master of life cannot be someone dutiful to life conditions, but someone that overcomes all of them so that he can take a full control over them.

Furthermore, by proclaiming the death of God, NIETZSCHE denied, may be unconsciously, the being existence also, because if the origin of all beings is no longer there, the beings also are dead and no longer there, and thus the superman he proposes also is dead.

For GABRIEL Marcel, however, "we are only entrusted to ourselves as works of art from the studio of an eternal Master. We are not our own masterpieces"[4]. Man is the master of himself and he is in possession of his life due to his dignity and autonomy, but this in no way implies complacency or self-sufficiency[5]. Man is master of his own life, but this mastery is a participated one. Man owns his mastery from the full mastery of God over all that exists.

In nutshell, as we affirmed the up above origin of life, its Master must also be not of this world. Man by free will is said to be master of his own acts. But this mastery belongs most of all to the Prime Agent, whose act depends on no other. The prime agent then must act in such a way as to remain master of his own action. But no one is master of his own action except he be a voluntary agent[6]. God only is the Master of life since not only he proves to be the first of beings but also the first principle of all. All things receive from Him their beings not out of any necessity of his nature, but by the free choice of his will. He is the Master of things he has made […], He is the universal Being[7]. God only is the Master of his creatures' life "because He who gives counsel rules him who takes it, and becomes in a

[1] Cfr.: M. HEIDEGGER, *Being and time*, (trans. John MACQUARRIE and Edward ROBINSON), Blackwell Publishers ltd, Oxford 1962, 72: 425
[2] Cfr. The 3rd paragraph of the prologue of Friedrich NIETZSCHE's *Ainsi parlait Zarathoustra*
[3] Cfr.: M. HEIDEGGER, *Op.Cit.* 73:426-7
[4] M. GABRIEL, *being and having*, *Op.Cit.*, 226
[5] Idem, *The existential background of human dignity*, Harvard University press, Cambridge 1963, 162
[6] Cfr.: Thomas Aquinas, *Op.Cit.*, 102, 128
[7] Cfr.: Idem, 226

manner his master […][and it is] God who not only gives to life itself being, and who is cause and who cause and origin of our being but […]from God"[1]

2.5. THE SACRAL CHARACTER OF LIFE

By reason of its origin and purpose, without we forget its Master we come to affirm above; human life is sacred and deserves this character due to his dignity. Human's life is based on his sacred quality as a created being in the image of God, and this quality is strengthened by a certain awareness of others' sacredness[2]. Human through the Being of the Absolute is able to achieve a loving community with others and he is able to reach the sacred character of his own dignity of course being aware of the sacredness of his life and that of the dignity and life of others.

In addition, the sacredness of the person's life does not lie in a nebulous personal relationship according to GABRIEL Marcel, but in the fact that man has been created in the image of God[3], the reason why even God's attributes raise from human life, but in a participated manner. We say that man is good since he participates to God's full goodness etc.

2.6. A REFLECTION ON ACTUAL CONCEPTION OF LIFE

During these days that are ours, the days during which our world is suffering from nihilistic vision of the reality, life is losing more and more its character, human dignity is more and more being reduced to a simple thing in a such manner that if no measure is taken, we will find human life completely reduced to animal one or even to machinery processes, a miserable destination toward which our humanity is tending.
This shift is not of yesterday since it sprouted little by little from long ago and it is nowadays becoming a huge and dangerous problem. The modernism proclaimed the end of religion, putting aside God in favor of human reason as the center of the universe. This has been a good departure point for Friedrich NIETZSCHE who declared that all efforts were nothing unless the will to power and proclaimed the death of God. The superman came in, as a solution to assume life without God and hence the start point of the nihilistic era, which still having strong consequences on ethics in particular and on life in general. In a world without God, without place for the absolute truth and value, humanity fall into anguish, and sought its consolation in the victory of sciences and technology despite evident disappointment which become more and more harmful to human life and dignity.

This nihilistic view of the world is now getting an up level, making human life senseless. Being reasonable, endowed by the free will and consciousness, man always wants to know himself and to know the surrounding reality so that he can react consequently. This is remarkable in questions he always asks himself, mainly concerning his finality: "where do I go?" etc. The nowadays drama is what humanity is calling "cultural revolution" that directly sprouted after the fall of Berlin wall (1989). This drama gave rise

[1] Idem, 297, 329
[2] M. GABRIEL, *The mystery of Being*, Vol. I, Regnery, Chicago 1951, 169-170
[3] Idem, *les hommes contre l'humain,* coll. « la colombe », Vieux colombier, Paris 1951, 175

to new conceptions on socio-political framework such as a new language, new paradigms, norms, values and new life style[1]. This consequently gave rise to the essential character of post modernism: "dissoudre le sujet dans la multiplicité et le placer sous l'esclavage de son désir (i.e. to dissolve the subject into cultural multiplicity, making him slave of his own desire)"[2], and man subjugates himself believing to liberate himself.

The postmodern revolution that begun with the end of the World War II to reach its acme by the fall of Berlin wall, has to keep the world in order, to make peace in the world, justice, freedom, reconciliation, and all that can constitute a comfortable life for all humanity as its apparent marigold. All those good intentions however, were hiding with them a deconstruction of all that is naturally human and of all that constitute essential value of man. Aldous HUXLEY in his "*le meilleur des mondes possibles*"[3] gave some conditions that are favoring the success of the postmodern revolution, based mainly on the improvement of technology and science development. Among them is conditioning and drugs. Nowadays the excessive use of computers in education is weakening children's minds in such manner that they are becoming unable to perceive any truth except that which is on the internet websites. They become little by little unable to apprehend the rational reality. By the sexual education that nowadays begin with the primary school, the child is being more vulnerable than others considering sexual vagrancy if it is of no consequence. This freedom in choosing sexual orientation gave birth to sexual deviation such as homosexuality etc. which are dangerous for human life. By homosexuality for example, there is no room for creation: humans are no longer concerned by the perpetuation of race on the Earth, and hence making life in trouble since it reads to the extinction of life one day. The use of drugs, however, due to its influence on our nervous system are the main cause of life disappointments that humans are nowadays facing resulting in many great crime against life such as suicide, abortion etc.

In the postmodern revolution everyone must conserve the place assigned to him; one is rich or poor. This give rise to the conflicts and precisely the fights and wars that are washing away people's life. In fact, those who are far-sighted than others, able to realize that the place assigned to them do not fit them as human search to free or to wake up the humankind or to free themselves, are quickly eliminated due to some reasons that are many and not true. Nowadays wars around the world are in that way of maintaining the place assigned to everyone.

Being first of all a cultural revolution, postmodern revolution encourages people, especially the youth, to the most refined and amusing types of leisure as a means to escape from the seriousness of the reality. The night-clubs, the deafening music, different types of games on the internet, matches especially football ones, films in series etc. are nowadays as refuge for those who are afraid to have conscience of reality. The result is that the one who have been familiarized with them, once dribbled of them since they cannot provide real joy, nothing follows rather than suicide because he/she does not see the sense of life.

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[1] Cfr. : M.A. PEETERS, *la nouvelle Ethique mondiale: défis pour l'Eglise*, institut pour une dynamique de dialogue interculturel asbl, Résumé

[2] Cfr. : E. PERRIER, OP., « *L'Eglise et la culture qui vient,* in la nef, 245(février 2013), 24

[3] Cfr. : A. HUXLEY, *le meilleur des mondes possibles*, Trad. De J. CASTIER, Plon, Paris 1932, 15

Furthermore, due to the science improvement, life is being pulled towards a dangerous situation. In fact, life is being reduced to machinery processes or only complex physic-chemistry processes. Scientists hope that by organic chemistry future progresses, they will be able to fabricate life artificially as well; but who will be responsible of actions those artificial beings will commit? By birth control, science tends toward the In Vitro reproduction in order to liberate women from the fatigue of giving birth and to make a sure control of human being; will those resulting beings be humans? All those and others are betraying human dignity for the interest of a small group of person, wanting to abolish human activity[1]by conferring it to machines. Postmodern man does not want to work by himself even in actions that are exclusively his, and he does no longer have a spirit of endurance in himself, whereas man is nothing if he does not work because a voluntary activity is a determination coefficient of a being; as Pierre Doris argues in his *La condition humaine*: "le travail ennoblit l'homme (the work ennobles man. To mean that you know man by his works)".

To sum up this short reflection, due to its nihilistic, secularistic[2], laicistic[3], technoscientist and relativistic[4] vision of the world, post modernity put aside God and all that is related to Him, whereas life without God, as we have seen in previous titles (origin, purpose, Master, etc.) is meaningless. Without God, no absolute value, and hence human dignity, and life in general are endangered because the lack of absolute value means relativism which implies the lack of commandment and man without commandment lives as an animal (loses his dignity), and so becomes dangerous for his fellow ones. Man nowadays has abandoned and lost the true good such that all became good for him, even the one that lead to his own destruction[5].
Despite this dangerous situation of postmodern revolution, man is a reed, but a thinking one[6]: being a weak and delicate being, man has the nobility of being able to perceive and recognize his degeneration and weakness, in a such way that warned, he can turn from the abysm on which he/she is groveling him/herself, toward the contemplation of the true truthfulness, which alone is able to provide to mankind the reason, and meaning of life.

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[1] **Human activity:** the action held and produced by human being in his whole essence, that is to mean, both body and spirit involved, in possession of all potential and movement organs as his nature deserves. The lack of one of these characteristics may cause deficiency in the action. (Cfr., THOMAS D'AQUIN, *Somme Théologique*, tome 2, Iª IIae, q. 18, a. 1, ad.3).

[2] **Secularism:** the principle of the separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the State from religious institutions and religious dignitaries. One manifestation of secularism is asserting the right to be free from religious rule and teachings, or, in a state declared to be neutral on matters of belief, from the imposition by government of religion or religious practices upon its people. For more reading visit *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secularism#Overview* or *http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13676a.htm*

[3] **Laicism:** Etymologically and historically, the term "laicism" suggests a movement wherein the laity seeks to take over clerical functions and to comport themselves in civil life without taking into account the Church's prescriptions and teachings. For more reading visit *http://www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-3407706390/laicism.html*

[4] **Relativism:** Cfr. : E. CRAIG, "Relativism", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, Routledge, London and New York 1998, 7318

[5] Cfr.: F.-X, TWAGIRUMUKIZA, *l'existance humaine et le sens de l'histoire selon BLAISE Pascal*, Extractum ex dissertatione ad doctoratum in facultate philosophie, Pontificas Universitas Urbaniana, Romae 1997, 16

[6] Cfr.: Idem, 18

Chapter III: DEATH

3.0. INTRODUCTION

The question "what is human?" calls another serious one: "what is death?", the reason why every philosophy or every study that pretends to explore the mystery of human life finds itself in front of that of death also. This is not astounding since for man as a necessarily finite being, life and death are closely related mysteries[1]. Since Epicurus there has been persistent philosophical interest in the problem of accounting for the evil of death because most people fear death for the disaster it represents. Death is as old as life, and people have seldom been at a loss as to when grief is appropriate. In other words, death is not a concept which required elucidation. Traditionally, permanent cessation of breath and/or heartbeat was accepted as a reliable indicator of death. While there may have been some uncertainty as to when cessation could be regarded as permanent, and the decomposition of the body could be relied upon to settle the matter in due course. But Problems arose when technology enabled the heartbeat and breathing of individuals to be maintained almost indefinitely; such Individuals on what is popularly known as 'life support' do not appear dead. They breathe; they are supple and perfused with blood, not cold or stiff like a corpse. For Karl JASPERS, death is a borderline limit, for Martin HEIDEGGER, death comes to put end to Dasein (being)'s life[2], whereas for GABRIEL Marcel and almost all believers, death is like a bridge between two lives[3]. Who can be right?

A well conducted philosophical analysis of death always meets two major difficulties: on one hand, all of human persons know about death; it is like a non-cleanable stamp in everyone's mind and heart. Everyone is willingly or not at least aware that one day she/he will die: rich or poor, strong or weak, white or black, intelligent or idiot, all will one day die and each and everyone knows death at least as "the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all"[4], and as "that possibility which is one's ownmost"[5] in accordance also with what a psalm singer said:

> *"them who trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the multitude of their richness; none of them by any means can redeem his brother nor can give to God a ransom[…] that he should still alive for ever, and not see corruption. For (we) see wise men die, likewise the fool and the brutish person perish, and leave their wealth to others […]. They called their lands after their own names […] their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling" (Ps 49, 6-14). "He shall go to the generation of his fathers, (where) they shall never see light (Ps 49, 19).*

Surprisingly, even though our work with time is apparently opposed to our work with death (human in his nature want to precipitate his earning of wage so as to survive, but on the other hand none wishes normally to precipitate his death), the two are entirely comparable. We work to compact time, but seeking how to chase away the death, whereas it is it that can easily cut down all our reprieves[6]. We know that one day death will come, but since we do not genuinely know what death is, we ignore what it will be like, we do not

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[1] Cfr.: M. HEIDEGGER, Being and Time, *Op.Cit.*, 47:237
[2] Idem
[3] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, *Homo Viator*, *Op.Cit.*, 65
[4] M. HEIDEGGER, *Op.Cit.*, 53: 307
[5] Idem, 50:294
[6] Cfr.: V. JANKELEVITCH, *La mort*, Flammarion, Paris 1977, 168

know the time as well, or what will arrive to us. Furthermore, we do not know if that which will arrive consists in something else, the reason why the sure event, anxiously understood subdues itself to a pure impalpable event. This common awareness of the possibility of death and experience to others' death render any philosophical analysis on death superfluous or waste of time.

On the other hand, due to the tremendous and anguishful character of death, man wants to explain it by affirmation of what it is not: immortality, since only by negating the human person's immortality, death is no longer a problem. This is linked to the fact that none can experience his death as actual. She/he can only experience death through others' one, even though this also is not in a genuine sense[1]. The fact also that none among human beings, except Jesus Christ who was and is true man and true God, has come back from the dead after a certain meaningful time and tell us how he experienced his death; all these obstacles make difficult any philosophical analysis about death.

As mentioned in our previous chapters, due to the trepidation of dying, many persons especially those who are at the last threshold of their earthly life (because it still possible that after it there is another life) refund the necessity of thinking about life particularly its end, aim, expiration and what will follow after they die. A serious dialogue or essay like this about life cannot not include also that about death since life of a wise man is meditation of death[2] as Plato exclaimed it, and meditation of life is bound with meditation of death as Baruch de SPINOZA claimed it.

3.1. WHAT IS MEANT TO DIE (DEATH)?

"All I know is that soon I must die, but the most I ignore is that death which I am unable to escape"[3] claimed Pascal BLAISE, showing that the fact that man will die one day is our inescapable destiny and we have to resign ourselves to it. Man can nothing against the necessity of death in general, one day, early or late. The question about what death has been along the time and still difficult as we know that one day death will come, but since we do not genuinely know what death is, we ignore what it will be like, we do not know the time as well, or what will arrive to us. Furthermore, we do not know if that which will arrive consists in something else, the reason why the sure event, anxiously understood subdues itself to a pure impalpable event.

For Plato in his Phaedo, death is nothing than the separation of the soul (the substantial informant form), from the body (the informed matter)[4], and so the moment when the matter is no longer informed. Hence in that sense, death is what contradicts and nihilizes life, but also we can, with Vladimir, say that death imposes a form to life, but always with a restraint such that death itself is a form without form and such formless form is responsible of the decomposition of organic form[5]. This definition however, is not acceptable to those who think that there are no souls. It is also unacceptable to anyone who

[1] M. HEIDEGGER, *Op.Cit.*, 47:282

[2] Cfr. S. AUROUX, « Les notions philosophiques », in *encyclopédie philosophique universelle*, II, Presse universitaire de France, Paris, 1990.1689

[3] V. JANKELEVITCH, *Op.Cit.*, 134

[4] Cfr.: PLATO, *Phaedo*, (trans. B. Jowett), in *The Dialogues of Plato*, Vol. 1, Random House, New York 1937, 447

[5] Cfr.: V. JANKELEVITCH, *Op.Cit.*, 93

thinks that plants and lower animals have no souls, but can nonetheless die. Others have defined death simply as the cessation of life. This too is problematic, since an organism that goes into suspended animation ceases to live, but may not actually die but at least it is the most common to many persons. Death is anguishful event to which every human person has to and must face personally[1]. It is an immanent possibility for every human being[2], a universal, tragic, inescapable, scary, and merciless event.

Sometimes death is viewed as the hour of the truth because none declare himself insensible to a dear person's death. Willingly or not, in a dear person's death, everyone sees his own death[3] since man "is necessarily a being-with (a being of relation)"[4] and as a being toward death "my death is a moment at which all my relations to others disappear"[5]. According to Martin HEIDEGGER, death completes the existence of Dasien (here understood as every living being, humans included also), since, as Dasein is essentially finite, it is a being toward death and death is disclosed to it as a possibility which is not to be outstripped[6]. Sometimes death is also viewed as cessation of life or the negation of life, but if it is so, remarkably there may be no way one can speculate on it without alluding to the negated life or overcome by a reality that is itself devoid of life[7]. Death is the end of organic life since according to Joseph NYASANI: "it is not with human experience that life is unending. […] the organic life of individuals does not endure forever. It has a limit"[8] and hence there cannot be death without there have not been life. As NYASANI argues also, there is no death without cause: "if I die, I do so because someone somewhere has contrived my dying and not so much because I may be physically debilitated or because I may be suffering from an incurable disease"[9].

For GABRIEL Marcel however, death present itself as a presence test because a death of someone that I learn in newspaper, someone with whom I never had a close relationship or friendship is to me as a simple notification that I might scratch out a person from a list of persons I could meet or to whom I could ask something; whereas for someone to whom I am closely related, it becomes very hurt to hear[10]. The death of our beloved ones is the most hurtful that one can experience since to love someone of my personage is- as GABRIEL Marcel affirms- to say "you will not die", and it is an affirmation that none can easily transcend[11]. Death according to the technocracy promoters seems to be the fact of becoming useless, like the collapse towards unusability, as a complete waste[12]; in a such manner that in a world where, due to the desiccant influence of techno-science, the

[1] M. HEIDEGGER, *Op.Cit.*, 50 :294
[2] Idem, 53: 307
[3] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, *Journal métaphysique*, Gallimard, 1927, 199
[4] M. HEIDEGGER, *Op.Cit.*, 26 :163
[5] Idem, 50:294
[6] Cfr.: Idem
[7] Cfr.: J. NYASANI, *Op.Cit.*, 65
[8] Idem.
[9] Idem, 91
[10] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, *Op.Cit.*
[11] Cfr.: Idem
[12] Cfr.: Idem, *les homes contre humain*, coll. « la colombe », vieux colombier, Paris 1951, 72-74

intersubjective relations would have completely disappeared, death would no longer be a mystery. It would be a simple fact, like a dislocation of a simple device[1]

Summing up, death has been, along the history of humanity, considered like an end to this life, a disappearance from the Earth and the break of all relations with others, the destruction of human body, etc. It aroused many disputes concerning what meaning can be assigned to death, but "the separation of the soul from the body"[2]revealed itself to be more relevant since it showed itself common ground than other view to more thinkers, believers and even philosophers. This however, gave rise also to a very important question, on which we will try to speculate later along this essay: "the after death or after life".

3.2. GOOD OR BAD DEATH?

This is one among the most difficult subjects on death to explore since it implies the internal feelings in dying time, and no dead came back to explain fully what kind of death (good or bad) she/he underwent. It is of the mystery order as Marcel explained[3]. Some seem to take the mystery to be that we cannot know or even conceive of what being dead will be like. This on one hand might be thought to follow from the fact that most of us who are living have no recollection of ever having been dead, and thus we lack first-hand experience of what death is like. And on the other hand from the fact that there is considerable doubt about the veracity of the testimony of those few persons who claim or recall having been dead, none of us can even claim to have a reliable second-hand report of what death is like. None can experience his own death as actual, but as a possibility to come[4]. Man can experience death through the dying of others, but in non-genuine sense[5], when his relations with others disappear. In this sub point we do not pretend to give in genuine sense what is good or bad death due to the boundaries we denounced above, but in the sense as it is experienced by those who remain after one is dead.

According to the Rutledge encyclopedia of philosophy, no death is good since the death is characterized by its inescapability and this is numbered among the greatest natural evils. In our manner of understanding and our human conditions, we cannot experience death as actual since what we experience on other's death are some few seconds or minutes before one's death and the feeling of us who remain after one's death. At equal distance between death and the personal life time limit, time represents a middle case where the organ and the hitch equilibrate themselves[6]. It is here that by our experience we can judge one's death as good or bad. Almost all who tried to talk of death's badness/evilness or even goodness oriented their contributions in deprivation, but this always to those few minutes before one's death. Since the philosophy of death instant is impossible due to the fact that all we can is to assist the dying person during his/her last

[1] Cfr.: Idem, *le mystère de l'être II : foi et réalité*, Aubier Montaigne, Paris 1951, 152
[2] PLATO, *Phaedo*, *Op.Cit.*, 447
[3] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, *Homo Viator*, *Op.Cit.*,100
[4] M. HEIDEGGER, *Op.Cit.*, 50 :307
[5] Cfr.: I. LEPP, *La mort et ses mysteres*, Grasset, Paris 1966, 30
[6] Cfr.: V. JANKELEVITCH, *Op.Cit.*, 103

moments and then escort the departed until his last dwelling, but the dying person himself, none can accompany him as he accomplish his lonely step[1].
In our daily life, we say that one underwent bad death by refering to his lifetime close to his death one. If one sleeps painlessly and die, we say that he/she underwent good or peaceful death, whereas one, who had had more pain before he dies and sometimes said to die due to those pains, is said to have undergone bad death. Others have countered that the evil of death may lie in the fact that death deprives us of the goods we would have enjoyed if we had lived. On this view, death may be a great evil for a person, even if they cease to exist at the moment of death.

In the philosophy of GABRIEL Marcel, we can distinguish two types of death closely related by depending on us, who experience it in a non-genuine sense (because only those who undergo their own death can experience it genuinely)[2]. For him, a death of a person that I came aware of by a simple reading in newspaper does not mean great to me, unless to be of a notification object. I become aware that one of the subjects I could meet in my life is no longer. This can be as a neutral death even though we cannot say that it does not, in any sense, harms us. The second one is the death of our beloved ones. This is the most harmful death to us since it provides us with anxiety, the feeling of loneliness etc. We refer to it as bad death due to its harmful character to us.
Due to the human's free will, man is able to harm, love, and hate others. This makes us able to understand the third death type. According to human nature, the death of my enemy is referred to as a good death to me and many times I am glad of it[3].

Furthermore it would not be enough to say that death not only is the void of our somatic being, but also the greatest void of our psychosomatic being[4] since it exclude all relationship and changes of time and space.

3.2.1. Euthanasia

Said to be a practice of mercifully ending a person's life in order to release the person from an incurable disease, intolerable suffering, or undignified death, the word *euthanasia* derives from the Greek for "good death" and originally referred to intentional merciful killing, but this is a pure contradiction since no mercy in killing or taking off one's life. The term "euthanasia" was also applied to a lack of action to prevent death. In general, we can remark four types or cases of euthanasia[5] which are also interconnected among them: Active euthanasia involves painlessly putting individuals to death for "merciful" said reasons. This is the case when a doctor administers a lethal dose of medication to a patient so that he/she can die without being aware of it. Passive euthanasia however, involves not doing something to prevent death. It is, for example, when doctors stop using an artificial respirator that was helping a terminally ill patient in his respiration. In Voluntary

[1] Idem, 219, 221
[2] E. GILSON, *Existentialisme chrétien: GABRIEL Marcel*, Plon, Paris 1947, 79-80
[3] Cfr.: Ps 18, 10-20; Ps 35
[4] Cfr.: V. JANKELEVITCH, *Op.Cit.*, 92
[5] T.- L. BEAUCHAMP, "euthanasia", in *Microsoft ® Encarta ® 2009.* © 1993-2008 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

euthanasia, a person anyhow asks to die (by either active or passive euthanasia), whereas Non voluntary euthanasia refers to ending the life of a person who is not mentally competent to request death, such as a comatose patient.

From long ago, Western laws have generally treated the act of assisting someone in dying as a form of punishable homicide (unlawful killing). However, in modern times laws have become more secular. Those who wish to legalize euthanasia have argued that, under principles of individual liberty (such as those expressed in the Constitution of the United States), individuals have a legal right to die as they choose. Most countries (including the United States), however, have not fully adopted this position and retain restrictions on euthanasia. . The majority of states have accepted a definition of brain death—the point when certain parts of the brain cease to function—as the time when it is legal to turn off a patient's life-support system, with permission from the family.

Even though proponents of euthanasia are convinced and believe that unnecessarily prolonging life in terminally ill patients causes suffering to the patients and their family members, euthanasia is against human dignity, and in reason of his sacral character, none except God (life origin, Master, and Purpose director), has right to put end to someone's life:

> *The sacredness of human life is conveyed by a Talmudic metaphor: the life of a gosse is like a flickering candle - 'anyone who touches him is a shedder of blood'. When a person reaches this final phase, the soul's departure must be neither hindered nor hastened, even where a quicker release is requested by the dying person*[1].

As it is not necessary to die at this date instead of that coming one, of this illness instead of another; as it is never grotesque of a such determined illness, never absurd to adjourn even a day the fatal day, even one hour the last hour; even an instant the supreme instant, there is no reason for which the patient that physicians condemn to die today cannot sustain till tomorrow, then after tomorrow. Even though death cannot be avoided in general, every particular death's anticipation must be avoided: little by little, by consecutive resuscitation hits, none can be sure if the growing longevity will not give rise to the immortality. Every patient, even notoriously incurable must be considered as curable and cured as such until the last sigh inclusively because none can know which the last sigh is. It is only when after the last hit no other follows that the last heart beat reveal itself as the last one[2]. The euthanasia that many seem to justify seems like a resignation. Normally and ethically, all still possible as long as there still such a little breathing on the patient's lips and in his/her chest. Due to the intelligent, cautious and temporizing action, the one who was at his threshold recovers, retreats and undo the accession of the fatal hour.

The wrong of euthanasia has, since long ago, often been seen in terms of either a violation of some idea of the sanctity of life, or the wrong of depriving a sovereign or a god of the use of a body which was theirs to dispose of. The idea based on compassion and

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[1] J. NOAM ZOHAR, "Bioethics", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, Routledge, London and New York 1998, 944

[2] Cfr.: V. JANKELEVITCH, *Op.Cit.*, 158, 159

tends to undermine the purist approach to the ethics of euthanasia, arguing that suicide and euthanasia are legitimate ways of bringing to an end suffering which cannot be adequately controlled or ended in any other way, can undermine autonomy because it lapses if there is an equally effective way of controlling the pain and suffering.
Euthanasia is not human except in some extreme cases, but not all.

3.2.2. Suicide

Suicide refers to all cases of death resulting directly or indirectly from a positive or negative act of the victim himself, which he knows will produce this result. Differently from Euthanasia, in suicide, a patient voluntarily brings about his or her own death with or without the assistance of another person, typically a physician. In this case, the act is a suicide (intentional self-inflicted death), because the patient actually causes his or her own death. Suicide has been condemned as necessarily immoral by most Western religions and also by many philosophers. According to Plato, Aristotle, St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, Kant and Hegel suicide is always morally wrong, although Plato inconsistently allowed some exceptions. It is argued that suicide defies the will of God, that it is socially harmful and that it is opposed to 'nature'. Kant himself in his *Lectures on Ethics*, argues that those who commit suicide 'degrade' humanity by treating themselves as things rather than as persons; furthermore, since they are the subject of moral acts, they 'root out' morality by removing themselves from the scene.

In opposition to this tradition, the Stoics and the philosophers of the Enlightenment maintained that there is nothing necessarily immoral about suicide. This tradition which goes back to Epicurus and the Stoic philosophers, argues that suicide is not only frequently justified but an occasion highly admirable. 'Against all the injuries of life', wrote Seneca in his *Letters to Lucilius*, 'I always have the refuge of death'. It is sometimes unwise, causing needless suffering, but it is frequently entirely rational and occasionally even heroic. Judging by the reforms in laws against suicide and the reactions to the suicides of prominent persons in recent decades, it appears that the Enlightenment position is becoming very generally accepted.
According to Miller in his *The Guilt, Folly and Sources of Suicide* (1805), suicide is 'repugnant to every genuine feeling of human nature'. It is 'as degrading as it is criminal'. It is a crime of 'complicated malignity' against which 'man, depraved, afflicted, and covered with evil, requires to be guarded by restraints'. The person who commits suicide 'is as great a monster in morals as an atheist in religion or as the most hideous assemblage of deformities in animal nature'. Writing in 1908, the English poet and novelist G.K. Chesterton declared suicide to be the worst of all crimes. Not only is suicide a sin, according to Chesterton, it is the ultimate and absolute evil. The man, who kills himself, kills all men; as far as he is concerned he wipes out the world. As Albert CAMUS argues, suicide is one of serious philosophical problems. In ancient Rwanda, and even in many ancient civilizations, the corpse of the suicide was beaten severely and violently as a punishment before it is entombed. This help us to examine so as to understand the feelings of those who think that human life has neigh signification nor purpose, that death is the acme and coronation to the said "absurdity(absurd life)".

Suicide is nowadays, frequently practiced in all human societies, but more in developed countries than in under developed ones[1]. In nowadays societies marked by nihilistic conceptions of the post modernity, where social connections are being broken off, and where everyone considers himself as the absolute master of his own life, humans believe to own the right to suicide as for their own pleasure or means to escape from life difficulties. When a human person considers himself as individual and not as a member of a collectivity, he/she easily loses the conscience of his dignity and so suicide himself[2]. Those persons who commit suicide, give many reasons justifying their immoral behavior, sometimes through letters before they suicide or even orally once saved before they die. Remarkably, all those evolve from interpersonal relations in societies and due to the lack of courage to assume normal responsibilities of human existence, thinking that at the other side of death, nothing follows except the full obscurity for relaxation, but none can be sure of this[3].

In many cases the appeal to suicide proceeds from cowardice. This cowardice can be subjectively motivated by some factors that do not engage the moral responsibility of the subject[4], but as bravely, cowardice is not in born. One rarely becomes coward or brave only due to his own fault or his own worthiness[5]. Sometimes, cowardice is accompanied on the other side by the vanity as its twin. It can be unjust to forget that there are also some who commit suicide due to their abnormal mental life (neurotic suicide), but necessarily, all suicide are against human dignity. One can say that it is his own life that he wants to end and ask others to never shuffle themselves in his own affairs or life. For this, I can reply to him, with GABRIEL Marcel, that his/her life is his/her own as a particular, but also his life is for others as an individual of a community, since "Simply for the reason that in thus disposing of himself (by suicide), he renders himself non-disposable for others; or at least he acts like a man who does not give himself the least trouble to remain disposable for others"[6], and man is necessarily a being-with since what one does is something that I absorb in various ways[7].

On one hand there are some who want to justify suicide by rending to him a martyrdom character. These are those who take advantages of the presence of a scary or even another situation that seems to martyrdom in order to escape from some responsibility or put an end to some pain. As GABRIEL Marcel, to them, we oppose the truth that: Suicide and martyrdom are strictly opposites. All this turns on the formula: the soul most essentially dedicated is ipso facto the most disposable. Such a soul wills itself to be an instrument; but suicide is the act of denying one's-self as an instrument[8]. We cannot end this point about suicide without mentioning that there is also romantic suicide committed mainly by those who kill themselves without any "objective" reason (even though there is no reason for suicide in all case), but only because they are rotten in their lives or simply

[1] Cfr.: I. LEPP, *Op.Cit.*, 117
[2] Cfr.: Idem, 116
[3] Cfr.: Idem, 119
[4] Cfr.: Idem, 122
[5] Cfr.: Ibidem
[6] M. GABRIEL, *being and having*, *Op.Cit.*, 124
[7] M. HEIDEGGER, *Op.Cit.*, 27 : 165
[8] M. GABRIEL, *being and having*, *Op.Cit.*

want to experience death. Here is classified also those who kill themselves under pretense of love.

Summing up, Euthanasia differs from assisted suicide, in which a patient voluntarily brings about his or her own death with the assistance of another person, typically a physician. In this case, the act is a suicide (intentional self-inflicted death), because the patient actually causes his or her own death. Both are against human life's sacred character and dignity and none has rights to put an end to his or anyone's life, all are crimes since for every being, nothing apparently is logical that he/she can renounce to his life even though he/she thinks it is better. According to GABRIEL Marcel and all believers (Christians), life is a gift of God to which man is not the owner, but a simple trustee. There is no great distinction between killing another person, and killing his/herself. As Saint Thomas of Aquinas argued: "it is unlawful to commit suicide or even to practice euthanasia because first, everything naturally loves itself, the result being that everything naturally keeps itself in being, and resists corruptions so far as it can. Wherefore suicide is contrary to the inclination of nature, and to charity whereby every man should love himself. Hence suicide is always a mortal sin, as being contrary to the natural law and to charity. Secondly, every man is part of the community, and so, as such, he belongs to the community. Hence by killing himself he injures the community. Thirdly, because life is God's gift to man, and is subject to His power, who kills and makes to live. Hence whoever takes his own life (or anyone's life), sins against God, even as he who kills another's slave, sins against that slave's master, and as he who usurps to himself judgment of a matter not entrusted to him. For it belongs to God alone to pronounce sentence of death and life, according to Dt. 32:39, 'I will kill and I will make to live.'"[1]As Kant, We have been placed in this world under certain conditions and for specific purposes. But a suicide opposes the purpose of his Creator, who created human beings primarily for his glory. Suicide arrives in the other world as one who has deserted his post; he must be looked upon as a rebel against God. We are sentinels on earth and may not leave our posts until relieved by another beneficent hand. Due to human dignity and the character that bears his life, etc., it clearly follows that suicide and even euthanasia are impermissible.

3.3. METAPHYSICAL POSSIBILITY TO OVERCOME NIHILISM AND DESPERATION

In this postmodern era, nihilism is the most influential characteristic and constitutes the most powerful evil from which the world is suffering. In a world where nihilism has rooted itself, life has no longer its value since nihilism is the mother of relativism, atheism and other evils that devaluate life such that many persons are falling into desperation provoked by such a conception of the world in general, but also by death in particular. In the nihilistic vision of the world, death is considered also as the last point of life, where nothing follows. Due to such situation, it is good to see, with GABRIEL Marcel, if man can overcome this nihilism and desperation resulting from death. Can there be any means to overcome that nihilism and desperation that have been little by little rooted in human soul?

[1] Saint THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, Benziger Bros, 1947, 1958/ THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, IIa, IIae, q.64, a.5

In fact, to overcome the two, one must know that it is not possible to represent to himself his own death. As Marcel argues in his "*Du refus à l'invocation*"[1], my death is not yet a fact, because if it was so, I would be able to surround it and take it as an object, and hence "the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all"[2]. I can overcome it in thought, imagining it as overcame if and only if I am able to occupy another person's place who will be able to survive myself, a person for whom what I call my death will be his/her death[3]. When I adapt it as a given fact presented to myself, it is by favor of that coincidence realized in thought. I cannot experience my own death as actual, but I can only experience it through other's death experience.

Also to overcome the two, one must know that it is not possible to treat as a fact the extinction of an absolute conscience. We are neither allowed nor have possibility to speak of the conscience when we are concerned with something that appears at a given time and disappears at another given time independently[4]. One must know furthermore, that it's up to us in our freedom to resist the fascination of death. With GABRIEL Marcel in his "du refus à l'invocation"[5], my death can nothing against me except by collusion of the freedom that betray itself in order to lend it that reality or that aspect of reality to which I identify the petrifying fascination power. Death can be a deprivation, an ultimate reality that, may be, dissimulate itself under such dismaying mask, but never annihilation[6].

3.4. DEATH AND DISTRESS

Many persons of our days experience death as a terrible fatality which seems to reduce at the failure all their life projects. Very painful is the fact that neither biology nor physiology and other sciences is able to answer the most distressful nowadays human's interrogations. The fear of death and anxiety about punishment and reward in the afterlife constitutes a major source of human distress, the reason why Epicurus to eliminate this distress claimed that the soul is material and mortal. Generally distress is caused by strong evaluations. Seneca, in his "*On anger*", argues that distress is one of the four main kinds of emotions: fear, pleasure, appetite, and distress of course. Pleasure and distress are miss-evaluations of already present thing; hence that death and distress be linked is not astonishing.

As MELANIC Klein argues, the fear of death is conceived to be at the root of all persecutory ideas and so indirectly of all distress[7]. The elusiveness of death both as a concept and an inevitable reality is tempered and demystified by the living experience. For as long as man lives and, indeed, right from conception, he must be said to experience death. Some psychologists even go to the extent of suggesting that the anxiety experienced in life is, in fact, related to the fear of death. Substantially, fear underlies and punctuates the

[1] M. GABRIEL, *Du refus à l'invocation,* Gallimard, Paris 1940, 184-185
[2] M. HEIDEGGER, *Op.Cit.*, 53: 307
[3] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, *Essaie de philosophie concrète*, Gallimard, Paris 1940, 211-212
[4] Cfr.: Idem, *Homo viator*, Aubier, Paris 1945, 195
[5] Cfr.: Idem, *Du refus à l'invocation, Op.Cit.*, 186-187
[6] Cfr.: Idem, *Journal Métaphysique*, *Op.Cit.*, 252
[7] Cfr.: H. Feifel, *the meaning of death*, McGraw-Hill papertacks, New York 1965, 115

living experience and it does not start at a given stage of our after-existence, but "it is in born as a necessary component and accompaniment of the actual life experience of the subject"[1].In our life we persistently harbor a feeling of anxiety about the outcome of our future. As Hubert MARCUSE eloquently argues:

> *"Man is not free as long as death has not been brought under his autonomy. The realization of such autonomy is conceivable only if death no longer appears as the negation of all negations, as redemption from life"*[2]

The distress hence affirmed is due to the fear of death, and moreover this fear of death stems from the uncertainty about the future which many times precipitates also physic trauma. A person waiting for a sentenced death or waiting for a capital punishment can be tormented to the extent of developing abdominal ulcers or even noticeable physical wounds apart from losing weight due to the distress of the eminent death[3]. The distress caused by this uncertainty compels the individual to change his spiritual, mental and physical outlook of life and can somehow cause to him some psychological disorders if no attention is paid. Where death reigns supreme, the more moral decadence becomes manifest. Mammon worshippers cannot simply reconcile themselves with the idea of dying one day especially because they mistakenly entertain a firm belief that wealth can buy everything including an infinite life license. When finally they are forced to succumb to the certainty of death, they are particularly tormented by the pleasurable reminiscences of the glorious and glamorous times of their life[4]. The fear of death as NYASANI writes, may not emanate from the fact that we resent to part with the joy of living alone but also from other factors which have to do with the way in; which we have come to regard ourselves as psychologically autonomous beings endowed with what Greeks used to refer to as *autarkeia*(autarchy) or simply as a feeling of auto-sufficiency. This psychological state plays some roles in alienating a person from accepting the inevitability of death as irresistible fact of human existence[5]. The death distress may be particularly exacerbated by the very thought of insecurity for oneself and for one's dependents. Every dying person experiences the fear behind the dark curtain in the same way he experiences a sense of compassion for those whose life largely depends on him. Even as he struggles to meet the dark fate with all the distress it entails, he also finds himself deeply worrying about what could befall his dependents once he is out of the scene. The nagging worry seems to translate itself into a fundamental despair and hate for this painful way that lies ahead.

As Isaïe NZEYIMANA claimed it in his *philosophie et rationnalité*, the radical origin of distress resides in the being itself since death is the most inevitable possibility for the being[6], and instead of being human accomplishment, death is, somehow, his annihilation. Hence death is always and everywhere the origin of distress.

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[1] J. NYASANI, *Op.Cit.*, 65-66
[2] Cfr.: H. Feifel, *Op.Cit.*, 29
[3] Cfr.: J. NYASANI, *Op.Cit.*, 73
[4] Cfr.: Idem, 78
[5] Cfr.: Idem
[6] I. NZEYIMANA, *Philosophie et rationalité*, Editions des Cimes, Butare 2010, 381

3.5. DEATH AS THE CESSATION OF LIFE

The most popular analysis of the concept of death is expressed by appeal to the concept of life with all processes it implies, and so inherits the obscurity of the concept of life. Hence the most problem in talking of death however, is its obscurity. It is not entirely clear that we know precisely what we mean when we say that something is alive or ceased to live. Furthermore, the appeal to the concept of life in order to define death seems to be inconsistent with certain empirical facts. One fact concerns suspended animation. However, freezing, drying and certain other procedures may be used to arrest the life functions of formerly living entities.

Viruses, bacteria and other micro-organisms are placed in suspended animation in laboratories as a matter of course. Sperm, eggs and blastulas of horses, cows and even human beings may be held in this state for months or years. Since all the life functions of such entities have been suspended, it seems that they have ceased to live. But since they can return to life again later, it seems that they have not died. The appeal to the concept of life with all processes it implies in order to define death therefore fails, since it implies that when such organisms go into suspended animation, they die.

In light of this difficulty with suspended animation where almost all life processes do not occur, it might appear that it would be better to define death not as the mere cessation of life, but as the permanent cessation of life: If an organism goes into suspended animation but will later return to life, it implies that it has not died because its loss of life was not permanent. A recurrent theme about death in popular thought (as well as in some philosophical circles) is the idea that death is mysterious. As we have seen, it is difficult to formulate a satisfactory philosophical analysis of the concept of death. If it is impossible to fully analyze the concept of death, then it is impossible to explain precisely what we mean when we say that something dies. It might be said therefore that, in virtue of this fact, death is mysterious. If we take in consideration man as well as he is concerned in our essay, in virtue of his constitution i.e. Body and Soul, it is not up to death to have the last power on life; death is, as birth, nothing than a transformation as Leibnitz claimed[1].

GABRIEL Marcel however when arguing seems to view death not as cessation of life as such, but as a bridge between two lives[2], and Kant claimed that when there is no time, there also is no end or cessation, meaning that since time is nothing else than one of the a priori categories of our spirit, death, consequently, can only destruct the said category[3]. Here death definition changes from cessation of life as such toward may be "cessation of organic life or biological life", but also the question still present such as whether human being includes or not something essentially different from its biological reality. Our first intuition however, earlier to all our rational constructions, show us that, human is other thing than our body. As Jean Charon affirmed, it is from those first intuitions that come our most irreducible certitudes[4]. In his *phaedo*, Plato argues that death is the destruction of the

[1] Cfr.: I. LEPP, *Op.Cit.*, 235
[2] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, *Homo Viator*, Henry REGNERY Company, Chicago1951, 65
[3] Cfr.: I. LEPP, *Op.Cit.*, 237
[4] Cfr.: Idem, 243

body, the separation of the soul (psyche) and the body[1]. He also argues for the indestructibility and indefinite prior existence of the soul.

Summing up this sub point and the whole chapter in general, remarkably, death is not the cessation of life as such, but may be cessation of organic or biological life. Due to the fact that man is not only body, but body and soul; and that this soul cannot be destructed by death as it is for the body, there must be something after the body destruction, simply known as human death. It is that thing we locate after this earthly life that is going to occupy ourselves during the following chapter because as GABRIEL Marcel argues that death is like a bridge between two lives[2], we must also try to explore it, as we come already to explore somehow this bridge even though it is not an easy task.

[1] PLATO, "Phaedo", *Op.Cit.*, 447
[2] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, *Homo Viator*, *Op.Cit.*

Chapter IV: LIFE AFTER LIFE

4.0. INTRODUCTION

Like life itself and death as we come to somehow elucidate in our previous chapters, life after life is the most difficult domain to explore due to the reasons we have already mentioned. This is a domain that many thought to be reserved to theology or to other kinds of belief, since it implies more realities that reason alone is not able to apprehend than those of life and death. Remarkably, as long as one goes from life (earthly one) towards life after death through death, the path becomes very narrow due to the stress and weight of this subject. However, we cannot be of the same view as those who think that human philosophical analysis cannot know something about the domain of after death, which is a question of all humanity. Philosophers, along the human history, have also been concerned with the question of whether people can survive death. This is open to several interpretations, depending on what we understand to be people and what we mean by 'survive'.

Traditional materialists take each person to be a purely physical object - a human body. Since human bodies generally continue to exist after death, such materialists presumably must say that we generally survive death. However, such survival would be of little value to the deceased, since the surviving entity is just a lifeless corpse. Dualists take each person to have both a body and a soul. A dualist may maintain that at death the soul separates from the body, thereby continuing to enjoy (or suffer) various experiences after the body has died.

Along this chapter, we do not pretend to provide a final conclusion about that domain, but in light of some philosophers such as GABRIEL Marcel, we will try to explore it as far as possible even though life after this life remains a mystery. Through points such as the survival of death, immortality, Christianity's view and eternal life, we will try to answer after a short historical background, to answer as precise as possible question like Can we affirm something after this life or after death? If yes, is it knowable? If yes, what is it like? Is there life after this life?

4.1. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Due to the inescapability and universal character of death[1], as we have seen it in our previous chapter, from long ago, each society and culture or civilization developed a kind of belief on the concern of the after death or after life. This was mainly told through myths explaining what happen either to the dead person after his death or to his remaining personage. Remarkably, the majority was convinced that there must be life after death and that this depends on how the dead person has lived in this world. One good example is the case of ancient Rwanda, where they were convinced that a well conducted life on this earth is rewarded by dwelling in Karisimbi[2], as a sign of a peaceful rest while the misconducted

[1] Cfr.: Ps 49

[2] **Karisimbi:** one and the highest peak among 5 extinct volcanoes of Rwanda. (For more reading, see "Volcan Karisimbi." Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008)

one is and must be rewarded by a dwelling in Nyiragongo[1] as a sign of the hell, where there is continuing sufferings. This shows that they were convinced that human life does not end by this earth or by death. As GABRIEL Marcel, they believed death to be a simple passage from this life to another life. Another hypothesis in mythological conception is the fact that almost all ancient civilizations have their manner of relating to divinities. In the ancient Greek and Rome, they have more than twelve gods and for example in Greek was hades [2] as god of hell. This shows us that they also were convinced that life does not end by this earth.

Around 6 a.c.n, after philosophy has been elaborated, rationalized and systematized by Greeks, as many other questions, the question about the hereafter life preoccupied also many philosophers along the time. The ancient Egyptians believed in the transmigration of souls (the passing of the soul at death into a new body or new form of being. Transmigration and reincarnation, or the rebirth of a soul in a new body, especially in a new human body, are roughly synonymous); their dead were embalmed in order to preserve the body so that it might accompany the *ka,* an animating force that was the counterpart of the body, into the next world. Among the ancient Greeks, transmigration was a doctrine closely associated with the followers of the philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras[3]. According to Pythagorean teaching, the soul survives bodily death, being immortal and merely confined to the body. After a series of rebirths in other bodies, each rebirth following a period of purification in the underworld, the soul becomes free eternally from the cycle of reincarnations. He was convinced that our souls always yearn to join the divine celestial bodies from whence they originated. This show as that Pythagoras, in his reflection, was convinced that after death at least something must follow in accordance with how the individual lived on this earth.

After Pythagoras came Plato who exemplified metempsychosis theory with his theory of forms. He, like Pythagoras, was convinced that having lived in this world, the soul after death can undergo of reincarnation in other bodies depending on how the previous man lived on the earth till its full purification when it will be able to escape from that series of rebirth towards the world of ideas[4]. After Plato however, Aristotle with his theory of Hermorphism[5] seems to be convinced that only body is destructed by death which he defines as the moment when the informed matter (the body) is no longer informed. After Aristotle came a succession of thinkers or a group of people such as Epicurus and Epicureans who in order to eliminate fear of death and anxiety about punishment and reward in the afterlife as major sources of human distress, claimed that the soul is also material and mortal. This marked a new idea since it denied the conception that was

[1] **Nyiragongo:** one of the two active volcanoes on the Congolese side of the virunga mountains chain. (For more reading see "Virunga Mountains." Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.)
[2] **Habes:** Cfr.: "Hades." Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.
[3] R. SORENSEN, *A brief history of the Paradox philosophy and the labyrinths of the mind,* Oxford University Press, Inc., Oxford 2003, 22
[4] Cfr.: PLATON, *De anima*, I, iii, 26/ PLATON, *Phedon ou de l'ame, genre moral*, (tradiction. Emille Chambry)
[5] **Hermorphism:** from Greek: *hule*, matter + *morphe*, form, the doctrine of form and matter. It is a theory first elaborated by Aristotle, who claiming that reality is constituted by form and matter and that each living thing is composed of soul as form and body as matter.(For more reading see B. NICHOLAS AND Y.JIYUAN, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Western Philosophy*, Blackwell publishing, Victoria 2004, 316)

reigning: that of afterlife[1]. For them, man is completely destroyed by death and we have no reason to fear it because it can never reach our being: "when we are, death is not, when death is, we are no longer"[2]. According to them no life after death, all ends by death.

During medieval period, God is the center of everything. A belief in eternal life where God is all in all is developed. On one hand, human beings have been created for eternal life with God. Saint Augustine is convinced that life does not end vainly with the earthly life, and claimed: "fescisti nos ad Te[Domine],et inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te (You've created us for You o Lord, and our heart is not at rest before it dwells in You)"[3]. Hell or heaven are two forms of life that one can undergo after death according to his earthly deeds since in souls there is merit or demerit whereby they reach their reward or punishment, which are the ends of their deeds. Wherefore just as a body is conveyed at once to its place, by its gravity or levity, unless there be an obstacle, so too the soul, the bonds of the flesh being broken, whereby it was detained in the state of the way, receives at once its reward or punishment, unless there be an obstacle[4]. We will come back to this period in our next points especially Christianity view.

The modern period changed almost all philosophical perspectives. God is no longer the center of the universe as it was in medieval period. Man and his capacity to know replaced God on philosophical ground. With Rene DESCARTES, life of human being does not end by this world because man is composed of the "res cogitans (Body)" which is destructed by death and by the "res extensa (compared to soul)" to which immortality is guaranteed by God. Baruch de SPINOZA and Nicolas MALLEBRANCHE are almost all in that perspective, but for the last, human soul is directly related to God without any idea of transcendence. With the philosophers of the empiricism, all is in experience or all is vain. All things that are not acquired from sensitive organs cannot found knowledge. It is hence remarkable that all ends by this earth, i.e by death. After death nothing follows for empiricists. With Emmanuel KANT, it is useless to think of after life since as the soul's immortality, God's existence, freedom, etc. cannot be thought because they cannot found any science; but he admit that all occurs on earth with a precise purpose and that there must be a supreme intellect, author of existence and governor of all things towards their purpose.

In contemporary period, things changed. Many systems have been elaborated such as nihilism which stemmed from the philosophy of LUDWIGH Feuerbach to attain its acme with the philosophy of Friedrich NIETZSCHE by his official proclamation of God's death. In fact, by the death of God who was considered generally as the author (origin) and purpose of life, all become vain, even the proposed superman cannot be. Life is an eternal returning. Hence no origin, no purpose, etc. with Karl MARX and his materialistic philosophy, all is material and or all is nothing. The positivism of Auguste COMTE fell in the same direction

[1] For more reading see M. J. OSLER, "Gassendi, Pierre", in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London and New York: Routledge 1998, 3039

[2] J. Hersch, *l'étonnement philosophique, une histoire de la philosophie*, Coll. « Folio essaies » (no 216), Gallimard, Paris 1993, 74

[3] AUGUSTINE, *Op. Cit.,* I.1

[4] Cfr.: Thomas AQUINAS, *Soumma Theologica*, I, q.69, a.2

as the nietzschean nihilism. With the philosophers of existence, among whom our principal author is classified, the existentialism[1] is born. GABRIEL Marcel found his conception of the hereafter on the fact of love, the love that God the author of all that exist loves his creatures: “Love takes pleasure in the eternity of his object”[2]. According to him, "to love a being," says one of my characters, "is to say you, you in particular, will never die."[3] For Marcel, the domain of the hereafter is difficult to explore. After Marcel and other existentialist thinkers, some doctrines concerning the hereafter such as Personalism, utilitalism, pragmatism etc. have been created, but, concerning this subject, all were almost in the same perspectives as those which came before.

In nutshell, all who admit the hereafter life existence are almost all those who admit in their philosophies the bi-composition of human being in the same or almost the same way as Plato[4]. Otherwise they argues that the after death life is impossible; an almost false conception, for the one who is able to think properly, and straightly.

4.2. THE SURVIVAL OF DEATH

Along the time, many are deeply troubled, due to a variety of reasons, by the question of whether humankind can survive death. Different interpretations on this question arise from different conceptions of the metaphysics of persons, and from different conceptions of death and survival. Materialists of one traditional sort such as Karl MARX and some categorical empiricists maintain that people are just physical objects (with only their own bodies and without souls). According to this view, People have psychological properties simply because their brains are functioning properly. A materialist of this sort might take the question about survival to be “will I (my body) continue to exist after I die?” Here, the person is taken to be the human body. If we interpret the question in this way, the answer is fairly obvious. In the vast majority of cases, the human body does continue to exist for at least a few months after it dies. However, since the brain is no longer functioning, it presumably has no experiences. It is difficult to understand how anyone could take this sort of survival to be of any value to the deceased. Almost certainly, the answer to this question must be no. Since If you are just only your body, and your body becomes dead and ceases forever to live when it dies, then obviously, you become dead and cease forever to live when you die.

Dualists however, maintain that each person has both a body and a soul. Classical forms of dualism admit that the soul is a non-physical object, i.e. not made of atoms or molecules. During life, the soul and body are intimately associated, the reason why some would say that during life the soul ‘animates’ the body. For Descartes, “I am not lodged in

[1] **Existentialism:** philosophical movement or tendency, emphasizing individual existence, freedom, and choice, that influenced many diverse writers in the 19th and 20th centuries.(For more reading see Dreyfus, Hubert L. "Existentialism." Microsoft® Student 2009 [DVD]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation, 2008.)

[2] M. GABRIEL, *Journal métaphysique, Op.Cit.*, 133

[3] M. GABRIEL, *Homo viator*, *Op.Cit.*, 147

[4] I.e. Plato’s dualistic vision of the world.

my body merely as a pilot in a ship, but so intimately conjoined, and as it were intermingled with it, that with it I form a unitary whole"[1]
For such a (dualists) philosopher, the question about survival may be put thus: "Will I (this complex of body and soul) continue to exist after I die and my parts have been separated?". Once we have accepted the metaphysical assumptions of this sort of dualism, the answer to this question seems to be "no" on one hand, but also "yes" on another hand. No because if the person is the complex of body and soul, and the complex is destroyed by death, then the person is destroyed by death. Though the parts may continue to exist, the compound itself must cease to exist and to live at death. But yes also due to that part that is not destroyed and does not cease to live.

Dualists of another tradition take persons to be embodied souls. On this view, each living person is a soul that happens to be attached to a body. Descartes seems to endorse this view of persons arguing that: "I have a body with which I am very closely conjoined, yet […] I am truly distinct from my body, and can exist without it"[2]. A philosopher who accepts this metaphysical conception of persons might understand the question about survival as: "Will I (my soul) continue to have experiences after my body has died?" Although some have denied it, the correct answer to this question is conceivably yes, and it is somewhat easier to understand why someone who accepts this metaphysical conception of persons might be interested in this sort of survival.

To sum up, it is interesting to note that on this second dualistic conception (that of person as embodied soul), it is not quite clear that people actually die. Of course, human bodies die. However, on the view in question, no person is a human body. Each living person is just a "Spiritus incarnatus (Incarnated spirit)". I.e. a soul that happens to be ensconced in a mortal body. That which continues to live after the death of the body. The soul does not die, whereas the body typically deteriorates and eventually goes out of existence after death. Philosophers as GABRIEL Marcel are of this conviction.

4.3. THE IMMORTALITY

One might think that the concept of immortality is the concept of never dying. However, this would be slightly misleading since it would imply that non-biological objects such as rocks and bricks, atoms and planets, numbers and properties, are all immortal: since they never live, they never die. It would also be misleading to suppose that the concept of immortality is the concept of living at some time but never dying, since this would also have odd implications. Consider a living thing that goes into eternal suspended animation. It never dies, but this sort of immortality is hardly better than death. It is better, therefore, to take the concept of immortality to be the concept of living forever. This seems more interesting, and is probably closer to the concept that we pretend to discuss.

[1] R. DESCARTES, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in N. Kemp Smith (ed. and trans.) *Descartes: Philosophical Writings*, Random House, New York 1958, VI: 239.
[2] Idem, VI : 239.

Defined as the state of existing eternally or timelessly, specifically regarding human life through the survival of the soul after the death of the body, the immortality of the soul, an ancient idea found in almost every primitive religion, was fully developed in Christianity. It claims that a soul never dies and will be punished or rewarded according to its behavior in the earthly life. Immortality in this sense has served as a presupposition of morality, or, in Kant's words, "a postulate of pure practical reason." Metaphysically, the soul's immortality was elaborated in Plato's *Phaedo*. He argued that because the soul is immaterial and simple, in the sense of having no parts, and occupies no space, it cannot be decomposed. In his *Regard en arrière*[1], Marcel asks himself how a person who is dead for a while can be present near or in front of me whereas she/he is not a thing or a physical being. In marcels philosophy, communion constituted only by spiritual interactions constitutes an important base. It is this word that he uses even though it asks to transcend the materializing through categories. One to understand this presence must go beyond the conception that supposes the presence of the sender and of the receiver since this relation is of only objective relations domain. One must find another language able to explain how a subject can experience the other subject's presence.

Marcel discovered that it is by the way of meditation that we can encounter the presence of others. He confront the question of immortality by relating it to the concept of love since "To love a being," says one of my characters, "is to say you, you in particular, will never die."[2] This is not merely a sentence in a play, it is an affirmation which it is not given to us to transcend. To consent to the death of a being is in a sense to give him up to death. Moreover, we should like to be able to show that again here it is the spirit of truth which forbids us to make this surrender, this betrayal. In his "*Fragments philosophiques*", he is convinced that death, as a problem, is wrapped in the act of love. I.e. love requests its object as transcendent over death and not as eternal essence but as survival of death. Love wraps the survival affirmation and we must affirm ourselves as survival as long as we are necessarily provided with love. Love does not create survival, but wraps its affirmation[3]

4.3.1. Obstacles to hope and representation possibility

With Gabriel Marcel, "Hope is essentially [. . .] the availability of a soul which has entered intimately enough into the experience of communion to accomplish in the teeth of will and knowledge, the transcendent act, the act establishing the vital regeneration of which this experience affords both the pledge and the first-fruits."[4] Thus it also implies that we must not confuse hope and ambition, for they are not of the same spiritual dimension.
The hope in immortality repose mainly on religious revelation or on a practical reason postulate. For those who does never live entirely in faith, and are not sure if once the thirsty they approve will be calmed down, it is independently of the theoretical difficulties, not the materialism than, from one side, the lack of experience and, from the other side, the lack of representation possibility, that makes difficult to believe or/and hope, and leave practically non-operating the immortality demonstration by the said rational philosophy.

[1] M. GABRIEL, *Regard en arrière*, in « *existentialisme Chrétien : Gabriel Marcel »*, Plon, Paris 1947, 318
[2] M. GABRIEL, *Homo viator*, *Op.Cit.*
[3] Cfr.: Idem, *Fragments philosophiques*, Nauwelaerts, Louvain et Paris 1909-1914, 84
[4] M. GABRIEL, *Homo Viator*, *Op.Cit.*, 10

The questions like: why those for whom, even after their death, we still in love, do not give us at least a sign if they still alive? Has the bridge between us and them been broken down?[1] etc., all of them will help us to dig deep asking ourselves: what are the conscience facts that can prove or that prove a soul deprived from the body? Is there any possibility so that we can represent to ourselves in what consists life after death? Let us first examine the possible concrete, coherent and conceivable signification of that life. Our conscious life is the conscience of our relations[2]. In our daily life we tend to argue that sensations disappear naturally as we do abstraction of the body since there is no sense organ, but these organs are nothing other than means of collecting, classifying and conducting excitations to brain. Necessarily, sensations are, in our souls, the facts of conscience produced by excitations, since necessarily, our soul can give first quality sensations, and those quality-sensations are conceivable as conscience results even in incorporeal subjects. The pure sensations are always abstract, the reason why it difficult to voluntarily provoke a vivid representation of sensible quality. Hence there is no reason of denying the possibility of representation, remembrance, thought and sentiment to incorporeal soul. It is perfectly possible to admit conscious deeds that do not exclude spatial and temporal representation such as names, signs or imagined expressions to an incorporeal subject. The being of the non-material world can without a corporeal medium be in mutual link. If death doff from the soul its corporeal world community, "life in the other world can be nothing than a natural continuation of the link where it is, just in that mood of life"[3]; and hence the souls of dead ones might neither be present to our external senses nor somehow in contact with the matter, but deals however with human spirit which with them belong to a great empire, provided that the representations that they will produce in the human might be clothed, in accordance with the rules of his imagination, with transformed images, and will make him remark out of him the semblance of corresponding objects[4].

GABRIEL Marcel however argues that "we have no right to extrapolate, that is to say to produce the curve beyond the region where observation is possible, for this curve may in fact be interrupted or perhaps stopped just where a definite equipment can no longer function. But this is precisely where hope comes into its own"[5]. There is only room for hope when the soul manages to get free from the categories in which consciousness confines itself as soon as it makes a clear line of demarcation between what it knows for a fact on one hand and what it wishes or desires on the other[6]. After differentiating desire from hope, Marcel shows that immortality cannot repose on the concept of desire since this one is animated by the intention of having and is selfish, whereas hope is animated by the love and implies the whole being rather than desire, the reason why one must transcend the desire of possession so that the communion between him/her and the beyond death beings become possible: "the more I am linked to a being by possession, the more my

[1] Cfr.: A. Wenzl, *L'immortalité: sa signification métaphasique et anthropologique*, trad. J.GOFFINET, Payot, Paris 1957, 17
[2] M. GABRIEL, *Présence et Immortalité*, Flammarion, Paris 1959, 187
[3] A. Wenzl, *Op.Cit.*, 24
[4] Cfr.: Idem, 25
[5] M. GABRIEL, *Op.Cit.*, 9
[6] Idem, 10

relation to it disappear"[1]. Hope admit the death of the other, and love triumphs over death. This helps us to understand that the being beyond death is continuously dedicated to the realization of the essential of life for us. The hope ensures us that after death one continuous to live and must maintain the essential of life for us. Only hope reveres itself as a requisite condition for the continuation of the communication with a being beyond death.

4.3.2. Personal immortality

One of the most perplexing problems for everyone who believes in immortality and in personal immortality of every human person in particular is that of the future existence of a being that life had not pursued till its natural end such as the child. Concerning that domain, human reason receives no indication from experiences, no basis other than religious even though there is exigency, postulate and hope. The lack of any concrete signification for that hope, postulates that faith. If we try to search for it, only by speculation, an imagination remains in us. However, it is not necessarily to, a priori, proscribe that term "speculation", since it is essentially of human persons. It is essentially of human person to think and to reason on the possibility of subject. A human being that may departure without ending its life task, the task to which he/she dedicated all his/her effort, a task that no any other could dare to interrupt and that was meriting to be ended objectively for humanity and subjectively for him/herself, could enter in deep link with those to whom that task could help. Does not his life's purpose seem to fail without his own fault? However if there can be communication among souls, if, with Fechner, we think that the remembrance of the departed ones is a normal form of communication, in that case the soul of dead ones cannot however realize otherwise what might be done for the living ones? It is by here that a religious person can question if that soul cannot help us interceding for us as well as the living pray for the deceased ones.

A kid, however, which unfortunately begins to develop itself, has not yet any planned task. It stills potentially (not yet) adult human. His body is not yet well developed to support task planning and all that it implies, and its soul still as a blank page from any terrestrial struggles' writings, from any experience and from any guilt: "table rasa"[2], but unconsciously, that soul has inside it the human idea, individualized in it and may be that idea make it tenderly dream always on the attentions of those who likes it and at it relations with God. As a simple imagination, but which is not to be taken only as a kind of possibility, it seems that for human existence to be eternally represented in all its phases, we must be as those little innocent and gracious beings, which remain what they are. The immortality has to and must be seen as the human person's engagement and creativity since it is essentially linked to life. Marcel is convinced that the spiritual link between God and his creature cannot be broken by anything[3].

[1] M. GABRIEL, *Journal métaphysique, Op.Cit.*, 121
[2] A. Wenzl, *Op.Cit.*, 85
[3] Cfr.: K. HANLEY, " Réflexions sur la présence comme signe d'immortalité, d'après la pensée de GABRIEL Marcel", in *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, tome 74, institut supérieur de philosophie, Louvain 1976, 211

4.3.3. Beyond life on the Earth

Along the time, there have been several issues that have been of interest to philosophers in the area of the beyond earth life. Among them are such questions as whether there is good reason to believe that human life and/or history are moving towards a final end; whether personal identity problems are solvable in the eschaton (the end-state); whether after death-life considerations can help philosophers address other philosophical problems such as the problem of evil; whether the very notion of disembodied survival of death is coherent; how (in Christian theology especially) immortality of the soul and bodily resurrection are related, etc. The common assumption of all eschatology[1] is that human life and/or history are moving in a certain direction, towards a certain end or goal. Three main options have been used since long ago by those who affirm human life beyond earth: reincarnation, immortality of the soul, and bodily resurrection.

Plato is the good example even though it is not easy to combine into one coherent account everything that Plato said in his dialogues about the soul and its life after death. Nevertheless, in both the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* he argued that the human soul, which he took to be the essence of the person, is indestructible and thus immortal. It survives death and faces judgment for its earthly deeds. Since Plato was convinced of the moral governance of the universe, he expected that this judgment would be just, with punishment for evil people and reward for the righteous. He did not dogmatize about the details of the afterlife, offering only 'possible' or mythic explanations. It is in those notions of rewards that one can localize the life beyond earth. According to Plato, that life can be good or bad, sweet or bitter according to the person's earthly deeds. Theories of reincarnation, at least those that posit a possible final escape from the cycle of life (death and rebirth)[2] also typically suggest an individual life beyond earthly life, even though sometimes it is difficult to prove it rationally. The Vedāntic school of Hinduism affords a good example. Ultimate reality is Brahman; it is pure being or pure consciousness and is beyond all qualities. The phenomenal world is *māyā*, the realm of illusion. *Māyā* is the product of the creative power of Brahman, not through conscious acts of creation, but through Brahman's emitting successive waves or emanations of reality. *Māyā* is unreal in the sense of not being ultimately real, of being temporary and contingent, unlike Brahman. Our goal here is not of giving the explicit account of these religions but to remark that in this religion after successive reincarnations the soul can escape to an eternal life (*Māyā*) since one aspect of *māyā* is the existence of *jīvas*, individual souls that are incarnate as empirical selves. Limitless numbers of *jīvas* have always existed and are born in various bodies, both human and nonhuman. After the death of one body, they are reborn in another, a *jīva*'s station in life being a function of its deeds in previous lives.

The idea of personal survival of death in Christianity arose late in the Hebrew Bible, but the hope of rational and spiritual revival on the 'Day of the Lord', after God will judge the wicked, vindicate the righteous and restore the nation of Israel, was ancient. In the first

[1] **Eschatology:** the study of or doctrine about the end of history or the last things.
[2] Cfr.: PLATON, *De anima*, I, iii, 26/ PLATON, *Phédon ou de l'âme, genre moral*, (traduction. Emille Chambry)

century AD, the Pharisaical party accepted the idea of life after death while the Sadducees did not. Christian eschatology points to the end-time as the period when Jesus will return and the divine redemptive purposes for creation will be fulfilled and thus mark the begin of the new life, the beyond earthly life. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. People will be raised from the dead and judged; the damned will live forever apart from the presence of God in hell, and the blessed will 'see God' in heaven.

Philosophically, there are many issues of interest to philosophers concerning life beyond the earth. Perhaps the most important issue is the question of whether there is any good reason to believe that human beings will survive death and/or whether history is moving towards a final end. As far as individual eschatology is concerned, most philosophers seem to have lost interest in the classic 'proofs' for survival of death, such as those of Plato or Kant. Some look to such empirical or psychological phenomena as near-death experiences, psychical research or purported memories of previous lives. But in general the project of offering philosophical arguments for or against survival of death is not nearly as popular as it once was. One of the most interesting philosophical issues related to eschatology is that of personal identity in the afterlife, whether the denizens of the afterlife will be identical to the ante-mortem persons they will apparently claim to be. Will the traditional criteria of personal identity suffice to establish that identity? If not, will 'closest continuer' or other notions less robust than identity satisfy the concerns of the religious systems in which most survival theories are embedded? Trying to answer this question, like Saint Thomas Aquinas, All created things are some sort of image of the prime agent, God: for every agent acts to the production of its own likeness. Now the perfection of an image consists in representing its original by likeness, there to mean: the image in fact is made on purpose. All things then exist for the attainment of the divine likeness; and that is their last end. Hence creatures will be identified to God[1].

Another important question is whether eschatological considerations can or should play any role in solving the problem of evil in a manner that there will be no evil in life beyond death. The apostle Paul said, 'I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to the glory about to be revealed to us'[2], but it was criticized unconvincing to 'solve' the problem by appealing to a future outcome that is hoped for but in no way assured. Theodicists like Hick in his *Death and Eternal Life* however argue that it is rationally permissible and even essential that they respond to the problem of evil from the perspective of their own beliefs or those of their religious community, which may well include belief in an afterlife and eschatology.
The question relating specifically to Christian eschatology is that of the relationship between immortality of the soul and bodily resurrection. Traditional Christian theories, such as those of Aquinas, combine the two, arguing that after death there is an interim period during which we exist merely as disembodied souls, and that only later, at the end-time, will our bodies be miraculously raised by God and reunited with our souls, thus making us whole and complete persons again.

[1] Cfr.: THOMAS AQUINAS, *Of God and his Creatures, An Annotated Translation of the Summa Contra Gentiles, Op.Cit.*, 242
[2] Romans 8: 18.

Concerning the conception of the beyond earthly life by the spiritism, Marcel is against those who for rationalism refuse to welcome in there philosophical reflection, the authentic experiences, but also in his *dignité humaine* he argues that in that domain, the searchers animated by a true critical spirit have to make their ways through the most difficult conditions in middle of nameless confusion where the error mixt itself with truth[1]. For him also the Sacred scriptures even those said to be correctly interpreted one cannot pretend to, a priori, make clear the metaphysical conception concerning the beyond earth domain, the reason why for him the theologian has no right to involve himself in reincarnation matter[2]. One cannot think of the beyond this earth life if it is not a way toward the All in all as an as full as possible communion.

Furthermore, the survival of death or even the soul can be attributed to a gracious and miraculous act of God; it can be affirmed that both body and soul are sinful and must be redeemed; and death can still be seen as an enemy. The traditional notion seems to offer a way of resolving a possible tension in the New Testament concerning the time of entry into eternal life. Thought Pauline especially seems committed to the idea that the general resurrection occurs at the end-time[3]; yet Jesus said to the 'good thief' on the cross, 'Today, you will be with me in paradise'[4]. The solution, then, is that the thief's soul went immediately to paradise, only much later in the end-time to be reunited with his body since in souls there is and must be merit or demerit whereby they reach their reward or punishment, which are the ends of their deeds. Wherefore just as a body is conveyed at once to its place, by its gravity or levity, unless there be an obstacle, so too the soul, the bonds of the flesh being broken, whereby it was detained in the state of the way, receives at once its reward or punishment, unless there be an obstacle[5].

4.4. CHRISTIANITY VIEW

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more"[6]. There are many different ways of understanding life after death in religious tradition. Often the religious views of the afterlife may conflict with one another or there may even be disputes amongst the believers of a particular religious tradition themselves. Concerning the hereafter life, Christianity is very strict and believes that there will and must be life after this life on Earth. Christian tradition argues that human life does not end by this earth. Christians admit that after death life may continue whether in heaven, the place reserved for saved sinners after death, in contrast to hell, which is reserved for unrepentant sinners, and purgatory, an intermediate place for sinners to expiate sins before going to heaven. For Christians, our lifetime "is a fatal failure before the door of death. Death, for them is not an end, but rather it is only the beginning"[7].

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[1] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, La *dignité humaine et ses assises existentielles,* Aubier Montaigne, Paris 1964, 182
[2] Cfr.: Idem, 181
[3] Cfr.: 2 Th 2: 1-15
[4] Lk 23: 43
[5] Cfr.: Thomas AQUINAS, *Soumma Theologica*, *Op.Cit.*, I, q.69, a.2
[6] Ap.21, 1
[7] E. MOUNIER, *Introduction aux existentialismes*, coll. « idées », Denoël- Gallimard, Paris 1947, 42-43

The act of thinking is a mystery; it is not entirely clear in mind. Marcel is in the bosom of the Christian doctrine, seeing in love the act of freedom, and this vision, we can say, coincides with the essence of any true religion that puts love in the center. The notes below present some different ways in which life after death is understood in Christian teachings alongside criticism of these ideas.

4.4.1. Resurrection

There are many ways in which resurrection has been understood within Jewish, Islamic and Christian traditions. These notes focus on the Christian tradition. In regard to that which is called the resurrection of the dead, it is necessary to understand the proper meaning of the terms of the 'dead' and 'resurrection.' The word 'dead' signifies merely that something has lost the soul, by the faculty of which it formerly lived. The term 'dead' then applies to a body. Moreover, if resurrection is of the dead, and 'dead' applies only to a body, the resurrection will be of a body. . . . 'To rise' may be said of that which never in any way fell, but which was always lying down. But 'to rise again' can only be said of that which has fallen; for by 'rising again' that which fell is said to 're-surrect.' The syllable 're-' always implies iteration [happening again]. We say, therefore, that a body falls to the ground in death . . . and that which falls, rises again. The resurrection of the body is an essential Christian doctrine, as the apostle Paul declares: "if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished"[1]. The belief in the resurrection originates from the accounts of Jesus' followers and disciples concerning his resurrection as recorded in the Four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles and the writings of St Paul. The afterlife is described as 'we will see God face to face'[2]. In Christian belief the situation of seeing God face to face is later called the Beatific Vision. The appeal to physical resurrection corresponds with our understanding of a person as a physical as well as a spiritual being. Some philosophers have suggested that the only way to speak meaningfully of life after death is in physical terms because existence as a disembodied soul would not be recognizable as meaningful human life in the way that living human beings understand it.

The philosophers such as GABRIEL Marcel, Emmanuel Mounier, Peter Geach etc. has suggested that meaningful talk about life after death would involve the reuniting of the soul 'to such a body as would reconstitute a man identifiable with the man who died' because it is only through the resurrection that it is meaningful to talk of an individual continuing to live or living once more. This corresponds directly with many biblical passages: 2M 7, 9-10; 1Co 15, etc. are precise examples. For Saint Paul Apostle "if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised"[3]. Responding to the question of how are the dead raised and with what kind of body they come, Saint Paul answered that all depend on God's will, but of course it will not be this we wear on this earth:

[1] 1Cor. 15:13–18
[2] 1Cor. 13:12
[3] 1Cor. 15, 9

"For not all flesh is alike, but there is one kind for men, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are celestial bodies and there are terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body"[1].

This is what Cyril of Jerusalem retook but with some more clarifications arguing that "This body shall be raised, not remaining weak as it is now, but this same body shall be raised. By putting on incorruption, it shall be altered, as iron blending with fire becomes fire, or rather, in a manner the Lord who raises us knows. However it will be, this body shall be raised, and it shall not remain such as it is. Rather, it shall abide as an eternal body. It shall no longer require for its life such nourishment as now, nor shall it require a ladder for its ascent; for it shall be made a spiritual body, a marvelous thing, such as we have not the ability to describe"[2]. Saint Augustine in his *City of God*, talking about those who accepted death for their refusal of denying God, argues: "Perish the thought that the omnipotence of the Creator is unable, for the raising of our bodies and for the restoring of them to life, to recall all [their] parts, which were consumed by beasts or by fire, or which disintegrated into dust or ashes, or were melted away into a fluid, or were evaporated away in vapors"[3].

Resurrection is a very important in Christianity since, souls (which death has not touched) must first be judged before entering heaven or hell. Souls must find back their bodies: "[Jesus Christ] sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From there he shall come to judge the living and the dead; at his coming all men have to rise again with their bodies and will render an account of their own deeds; and those who have done good will go into life everlasting, but those who have done evil, into eternal fire[4]. See, too with Minucius Felix, how for our consolation all nature suggests the future resurrection. The sun sinks down, but is reborn. The stars go out, but return again. Flowers die, but come to life again. After their decay shrubs put forth leaves again; not unless seeds decay does their strength return. A body in the grave is like the trees in winter: They hide their sap under a deceptive dryness. Why are you in haste for it to revive and return, while yet the winter is raw? We must wait even the spring of the body. I am not ignorant of the fact that many, in the consciousness of what they deserve, would rather hope than actually believe that there is nothing for them after death. They would prefer to be annihilated rather than be restored for punishment[5]. According to Pope Clement I, Resurrection always take place so that even for the unbelievers or non-Christian people may find no way to refuse it: "[…] the Master is continually proving to us that there will be a future resurrection, of which he has made the Lord Jesus Christ the firstling, by raising him from the dead. Let us look, beloved, at the resurrection which is taking place seasonally. Day and night make known the resurrection to us. The night sleeps, the day arises. Consider the plants that grow. How and in what manner does the sowing take place? The sower went forth and cast each of the seeds onto

[1] 1Cor. 15, 39-44
[2] *Catechetical Lectures* 18:18
[3] SAINT AUGUSTINE, *The City of God* 22:20:1
[4] Rom. 2:6–11
[5] Cfr.: F. MINUCIUS, *Octavius* 34:11–12

the ground; and they fall to the ground, parched and bare, where they decay. Then from their decay the greatness of the master's providence raises them up, and from the one grain more grow and bring forth fruit"[1]. For Christian any speech about the afterlife can in no manner exclude resurrection at all.

4.4.2. Eternal life

From medieval period, following the work of Boethius and Augustine of Hippo eternal life in God became the dominant view in Christianity. Etymologically, The English word 'eternal' comes from 'aeturnus' in Latin, itself a derivation from 'aevum', an age or time. So 'eternity' means everlastingness. However in medieval period, the styles of those two thinkers are very different. Boethius in his fifth Book of *The Consolation of Philosophy* presents the idea of eternal life as straightforward and relatively problem-free, while Saint Augustine in his eleventh book of *de Confessione* wrestles with the idea and expresses continual puzzlement and indeed amazement at the idea of time itself and with it the contrasting idea of divine eternality. Most of Christians argues that eternal life is not only living forever in heaven, but that it is more than that since as saint John argues: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."[2] Hence eternal life is also a here-and-now thing. The idea of eternal life is of life that never ends. An afterlife where there is no death. But it is also talking about eternal life that we "have" right now -- not "will have someday." In our small essay, we will take in consideration the first meaning, as long as afterlife is concerned.

In those perspectives, Christians are convinced that there must be an eternal life after death, since life cannot end in vain. *Eternal life* means existing always, without an end or beginning. According to the Gospel of Saint Mathew, only the people who believe in God will go and enjoy eternal life whereas the evil people will go away to be punished forever[3]. At this point of view, we think eternal life depends also on one's deeds in this life. The story of a rich man and a poor man Lazarus in the bible illustrates this very clearly. A Rich man enjoys the best things every day, and if we see Lazarus was a poor man and in such bad condition he lived, his body was covered with wounds. He was often put by the rich (Lazarus) man's gate, etc.[4]. For Christians Eternal life means escaping the power of death. This earthly life ends by death, and everything that lives on this earth will die. Physically, there is no way to escape from death; but as death has not been the end of the story for Jesus (God brought Him back to life), in the same way, death is not the end of the story for human being, God's creature by excellence: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"[5] God Himself, as the origin and purpose of life as we have seen it in our previous chapters, is not pleased and do not want the death (here eternal one) of His creatures, especially human being[6].

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[1] POPE CLEMENT I, *the Letter to the Corinthians* 24:1–6 [A.D. 80]
[2] Jn 3:16
[3] Mt 25:46
[4] Lk 16:19- 23
[5] Rom 6:23.
[6] Dt 30, 19-20

What eternal life is not, is eternal death. John 3:16 says that people with eternal life will not "perish," a word that means "be totally destroyed." Matthew 25:46 talks about "eternal punishment" as the destiny of people whose lives aren't lived God's way. If eternal life is living forever with God, then maybe the opposite is dying forever, or maybe it's living forever apart from God. Saint Thomas of Aquinas argues[1] that Eternity truly and properly so called is in God alone, because eternity follows on immutability; as appears from the first article. But God alone is altogether immutable. Accordingly, however, as some receive immutability from God, they share in His eternity. Thus some receive immutability from God in the way of never ceasing to exist; in that sense it is said of the earth, "it standeth forever" (Eccles. 1:4). Again, some things are called eternal in Scripture because of the length of their duration, although they are in nature corruptible; thus[2] the hills are called "eternal" and we read "of the fruits of the eternal hills."[3] Some again, share more fully than others in the nature of eternity, inasmuch as they possess unchangeableness either in being or further still in operation; like the angels, and the blessed, who enjoy the Word, because "as regards that vision of the Word, no changing thoughts exist in the Saints," as Augustine says[4].Hence those who see God are said to have eternal life; according to that text, "This is eternal life, that they may know Thee the only true God,"etc.[5].

In addition, most of all, eternal life is the kind of life that results from a close, loving relationship with our heavenly Father and His only Son. “This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (John 17:3). Eternal life is a life that is full and free and forever. It is peace, joy and assurance. It is comfort, strength and hope. It's never-ending life with God life in heaven after we die. According to Christians, Eternal life after death is through Jesus[6], and it is the Ultimate Goal of this earthly life since God do not want that His creatures perish[7] in a such manner that Some see their life here as a step to eternal life in Heaven, when the ascension of their souls will allow them to join with God and their loved ones. This eternal life can be only achieved by passing through death which is nothing other than a bridge between. Our souls have a journey to fulfill, and with each life there is a purpose that leads them through this journey or a so called life path necessarily towards eternal life.

[1] Thomas AQUINAS, *Soumma Theologica*, *Op.Cit.*, 55/ Thomas AQUINAS, *Soumma Theologica*, *Op.Cit.*, I, q.8, a3
[2] Cfr:.Ps. 75:5
[3] Dt. 33:15
[4] AUGUSTINE, *De Trinitate*, xv
[5] Jn. 17:3
[6] Cfr. Jn 3:15
[7] Dt 36, 19-20

GENERAL CONCLUSION

After having somehow seen through some of its angles such as its origin, its purpose, its Master, its sacral character and what it means, and then had a little critical reflection on nowadays conception of life; we've seen death as bridge between two life, and some points linked to it such as what does it mean to die, whether one can say good or bad death, death and distress, etc. we've seen also whether one can say of life after life, through points like the survival of death, immortality, and the Christian view about the afterlife. We have undergone through all those points guided mainly with the philosophy of GABRIEL Marcel, a French Roman Catholic, and existentialist philosopher, dramatist, and critic; and now as we come almost around the end of our essay, it's time to conclude, even though we do not pretend to have afforded a full and last view on this problem, rather than providing our contribution concerning Life after life, and provoking in others a desire to explore that domain as far as possible.

The main question of our essay was to know if something can be after this earthy life's horizons, a question to which we saw that along the history many thinkers tried to give their point of view, but that no one of them can be considered as more true than other because no one came up from there to tell the living men what happens there. Three major elements from Marcel's thought helped us in clarifying the presential character of survival and in identifying the subjective dispositions that constitute its conditions of possibility: the overcoming of categories delivered from the model of the objects and their relationships in order to think presence in terms of intersubjective being; a careful of how a subject who is not a subject-object can nevertheless be present affecting and enriching the being of a person; and a reflective examination of the significant difference between possessive desire and the oblative love that animates hope since, as NYASANI Joseph argues, it is absolutely absurd to speak of life without bringing into the idea of death as long as it is one of the intrinsic nature of life. Life postulate transcendence and this one comes about through an act of overcoming or negating. Life which suffers no negation would be one that is interminable and absolutely uninterrupted. This is only possible out of human experience, after death, because the organic life of individuals does not endure forever, it has limits[1], but those limits are also like a bridge towards another kind of life. Life is the ultimate objective and goal even for the person desiring to have his physical life terminated (see Euthanasia and suicide). The chagrin at death is nothing more than a hidden wish to obtain a quick and decisive relief in readiness for an unending life of happiness, leisure, and absolutely pain-free life. In life after life context, death is regarded more as means to a real and authentic life than a mere total negation of life[2].

For Marcel, the life after life can be known since by transcending the desire of possession one is able to enter communion with the beyond death being: " the more I am linked to a being by possession, the more the relation to it disappear"[3]. The presence of a beloved being goes beyond death and realizes itself under a modality of a trans-subject

[1] Cfr.: J. NYASANI, *Op.Cit.*, 67
[2] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, *Homo viator, Op.Cit.*, 89
[3] Idem, *Journal métaphysique, Op.Cit.*

presence. This is shown by the fact that during the other's (the dead one), the subject proofs to be under an inside impulse that inspire his/her life[1]. His presence can realize itself out of all material circumstances, as long as the phenomenon of inter personal presence comes from a reality of another level rather than that of objective relations, this presence is not a distinct entity, but a communion realized by a spiritual interaction[2].

In nutshell, to the lover of wisdom, I would insist that I am not under the delusion that I have somehow "proven" that there is life after death. However, when one says that one has drawn certain "conclusion," one is implicitly making the claim that anyone who begins from the same premises must arrive at the same conclusion, unless he has made a mistake in logic. This indicates why I refuse to draw any "conclusions" from my essay and study and why I say that I am not trying to construct a proof of the ancient doctrine of the survival of bodily death and that of life after death. Yet I think that my contribution is very significant. In fact, it might be more appropriate to ask, not what conclusions I have drawn on the basis of my study, but rather how the study has affected me personally. In view of this, some might ask, "If the interpretation of this subject is ultimately such a subjective matter, why study them?" I can think of no other way to answer this than to point again to the universal human concern with the nature of death, and what follows after death. I believe that any light whatever which can be shed on the nature of death is to the good. Enlightenment on this subject is needed by members of many professions and academic fields. It is needed by the physician who has to deal with the fears and hopes of the dying patient and by the minister helping others to face death. If experiences of the type which I have discussed are real, they have very profound implications for what every one of us is doing with his life. "For, then it would be true that we cannot fully understand this life until we catch a glimpse of what lies beyond it"[3].

[1] Cfr.: K. HANLEY, *Op.Cit.*, 226
[2] Cfr.: M. GABRIEL, *Présence et immortalité*, *Op.Cit.*, 187
[3] A. RAYMOND MOODY, *Op.Cit.*, 157

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